



1 Corinthians 15:29-34 Do Not Be Deceived!

Bad Company Ruins Good Morals

October 26, 2014

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:29-34

- We are calling today's message: "Do Not Be Deceived."
- By God's grace, we are going to carefully anchor this statement in its context in just a few minutes, but for those of you who've been following along with us in this epistle, would you say it's safe to say there was A LOT of deception and bad doctrine in Corinth? ☺
- Recall:
 1. Deception concerning divisions in the church (Chapters 1 & 3)
 2. Deception concerning true wisdom versus worldly wisdom (Chapters 1 & 2)
 3. Deception concerning personal pride instead of following a godly example (Chapter 4)
 4. Deception concerning sexual immorality and the prideful allowance of it (Chapter 5)
 5. Deception concerning how to treat one's brother (Chapter 6)
 6. Deception concerning biblical marriage and singleness (Chapter 7)
 7. Deception concerning the participation by believers in idolatrous practices (Chapters 8-10)
 8. Deception concerning what is appropriate in worship and the Lord's Table (Chapter 11)
 9. Deception concerning the assigning of a different value upon people in the church (Chapters 12-13)
 10. Deception concerning the use of gifts and church order (Chapter 14)
 11. And even deception concerning the resurrection of all believers! (Chapter 15)
- There was lots of work to do in Corinth! ☺
- I've often wondered how susceptible WE ARE to deception as well. No one likes to think THEY can be caught out, but I'm not so sure...
- So before we close, we give a few "deception protections" that prayerfully will bless you. On to the Text:

1 Corinthians 15:29-34

1. *(1Co 15:29 ESV) Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?*

- This is a tough passage of Scripture to interpret, one subject to lots of debate.
- Mormons use this verse to justify their practice of being baptized on behalf of dead relatives. The Catholic church of centuries past may have used this verse to justify the selling of indulgences to free dead relatives from purgatory.
- So what does it mean?
- William MacDonald's *Believers Bible Commentary* gives us some real help here:

"It is contended by some that living believers may be baptized for those who have died without having undergone this rite. Such a meaning is quite foreign to the Scriptures. Others believe that baptism for the dead means that in baptism we reckon ourselves to have died. This is a possible meaning but it does not fit in too well with the context.

The interpretation which seems to suit the context best is this: At the time Paul wrote, there was fierce persecution against those who took a public stand for Christ. This persecution was especially vicious at the time of their baptism. It often happened that those who publically proclaimed their faith in Christ in the waters of baptism were martyred shortly thereafter. But did this stop others from being saved and from taking their place in baptism? Not at all. It seemed as though there were always new replacements

coming along to fill up the ranks of those who had been martyred. As they stepped into the waters of baptism, in a very real sense they were being baptized for, or in the place of the dead.

Hence the dead here refers to those who died as a result of their bold witness for Christ. The apostle's argument here is that it would be foolish to be thus baptized to fill up the ranks of those who had died if there is no such thing as resurrection from the dead. It would be like sending replacement troops to fill up the ranks of an army that is fighting a lost cause."

- In truth, I'm not sure what practice Paul is referring to, but Brother MacDonald's take seems to be the most plausible of those I've read and studied. You be the judge.

2. *(1Co 15:30 ESV) Why are we in danger every hour?*

- In keeping with the context of 1 Cor 15, Paul essentially asks, "Why are we risking our lives to preach the Gospel if there is no resurrection?"
- Paul would go on to tell this church:

2Co 11:24-33 ESV Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. (25) Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; (26) on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; (27) in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (28) And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. (29) Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? (30) If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. (31) The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. (32) At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, (33) but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

- Why go through all this if we simply die and cease to exist?

3. *(1Co 15:31 ESV) I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!*

- In other words, "I'm telling you all this because of my pride in you in Christ Jesus. For His sake and for His Gospel, I die daily!"
- Paul's motive throughout this epistle was to call the Corinthians to a higher, more pure, more holy **standard**, even if that meant suffering.

4. *(1Co 15:32 ESV) What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*

- Paul is likely referring to people who opposed his ministry in Ephesus, not literal beasts, although writing this letter from Ephesus, he certainly experience lots of trouble there.
- Acts 19 reports a great altercation with Ephesian residents after Paul's ministry was prevailing over pagan worship. It was literally a riot where Paul's life was in danger.
- His point here to say, "Why go through all this if there is no resurrection? You might as well party if we are just going to die!"
- How many Christians would never say this but essentially live this way...focused on looks, clothes, food, goods, money, comfort, pleasure, and ease?

5. *(1Co 15:33 ESV) Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*
- In context, "Corinthian church, stop listening to people spewing bad doctrine: TRUTH MATTERS."
 - Could it be that part of the reason the Corinthians were so lax in their understanding of sin versus righteousness and in their ability to hold to good doctrine was because they were listening to false teachers (a main theme in 2 Corinthians, by the way)? This was apparently the issue...false teachers in Corinth teaching against a literal, bodily resurrection of believers.
 - It's hard to overestimate the impact the **voices** of others can have on what we believe, and subsequently, how we live. This is a theme throughout Scripture.
 - From the people's murmuring in Moses' day, to the bad leadership of certain kings in Israel's history, to the false prophets and priests who led people astray in the times of the major prophets, to the religious leaders of Christ's day stirring up opposition, to the same in Acts, to now.
 - Who you listen to **matters**:
 - *Pro 13:20 ESV* Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.
 - *Pro 2:11-12 ESV* discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, (12) delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech,
 - *Pro 4:14-16 ESV* Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. (15) Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on. (16) For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.
 - *2Ti 2:15-19 ESV* Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (16) But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, (17) and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, (18) who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. (19) But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."
 - I'm not trying to make anyone **paranoid**, but real wisdom is needed when it comes to who and what you allow to feed your mind and spirit.
 - I'm not saying become a judgmental Pharisee; I'm saying know the truth and listen for it.
6. *(1Co 15:34 ESV) Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.*
- Paul issues a firm rebuke: "Wake up from this drunkenness (a good metaphor of deception)! Stop listening to this bad doctrine and stop sinning! Stop listening to people who have no knowledge of God even if they think they do! You should be ashamed you allowed this to happen! You should be ashamed you allowed these men to teach and upset the Body!"
 - In other words: DO NOT BE DECEIVED.

Avoiding Deception: A Basic Primer

First, understand that even the most sincere Christian can be deceived in areas and led astray:

- *Mat 24:24 ESV* For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.
- *Act 20:26-30 ESV* Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, (27) for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. (28) Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (29) I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among

you, not sparing the flock; (30) and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

- *Gal 1:6 ESV* I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--
- *2Co 11:1-3 ESV* I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! (2) For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. (3) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.
- *Col 2:8 ESV* See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

1. Now with that understanding, make sure you have **repented** and **believed**. There is NO avoiding deception when you are, by nature, deceived! ☺
 - *2Co 4:3-4 ESV* And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. (4) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
2. Next, know the truth of the Word for **yourself**.
 - *2Ti 3:12-16 ESV* Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, (13) while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (14) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it (15) and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...
3. Get godly **counsel**.
 - This would include people in your life with a proven track record of godliness and church leaders who have proven the same. Look for those with **PROVEN** wisdom.
 - *Pro 11:14 ESV* Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.
 - *Heb 13:17 ESV* Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
4. Know your **history**...of the church that is.
 - This one you may not have expected. Much of the deception we see around us in culture comes from desiring a “new thing.” But if our “new thing” is totally different than the Church’s historic 2000 year position, we should pause and look again to make sure we haven’t gotten off. Most heresies and deceptions aren’t new; they are quite old.
 - *2Th 2:15 ESV* So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.
5. **Pray!** ☺
 - *Rom 8:26 ESV* Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Amen!