

## Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church

Winter, 2020

### Spiritual Warfare: Paul's Appeal to the Church

*17 I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. 18 For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. 19 For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (Romans 16:17-20)*

#### 1. Context: Connection to Romans 16:1-16

Paul's understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the body of Christ as expressed and exemplified by the apostle necessarily occurs in a broader context of present \_\_\_\_\_ and conflict with \_\_\_\_\_ forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

#### 2. The Appeal

##### A. The Nature of the Threat (17)

1) Cause \_\_\_\_\_ and create \_\_\_\_\_

2) Contrary to the \_\_\_\_\_ that you have been taught.

##### B. Identifying the Threat

1) Serve their own \_\_\_\_\_.

"As long as we wish our lives to be approved by men, we shall be full of lies, deceptions, schemes, plots, and manipulations; so that it will cause us to disguise the darkness so that it appears light and even to make sin a virtue. And yet, when we shall have satisfied all the men on earth, we will have gained nothing.

"We must all have our mouths closed; for God is neither satisfied by beautiful appearances nor fooled by our most cunning disguises nor is he taken in by self-deluded, hidden schemes and plots. He looks at the heart, He sounds the thought, He discovers everything that is hidden in the shadows." – John Calvin (excerpt from sermon on Job 31:4)

- 2) The manner of their \_\_\_\_\_ and beguiling of the naïve.
  1. Smooth talk and flattery (“propagandists” who “corrupt the purity and simplicity of the gospel.”<sup>1</sup>)
  2. The Naïve
    - a) The “Simple” as Prey

4 “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks sense she says, 5 “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. 6 Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.” (Proverbs 9:4-6)

- b) Culpable Naivete: Blinded by Conceit

6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:6-7)

3. Deceive the hearts: The Deceiver

9 The coming of the lawless one is by **the activity of Satan** with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to **deceitful spirits and teachings of demons**, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

11 But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when **their passions draw them away from Christ**, they desire to marry 12 and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. 13 Besides that, **they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not**. 14 So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and **give the adversary no occasion for slander**. 15 For **some have already strayed after Satan**. (1 Timothy 5:11-15)

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<sup>1</sup> John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 236.

**C. Meeting the Threat**

1) Avoid (17)

2) Fortify: Adorn the Gospel! (19)

*... I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.*

**D. Deliverance from the Threat: Soon and Very Soon!**

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