

Warning of Godless Men

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[0:00] 2 Timothy 3, and we're reading verses 1-9. But mark this, there will be terrible times in the last days.

! People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient! Disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power, have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

Just as Janus and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men opposed the truth. men of depraved minds, who as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.

But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone. Amen. You all are well aware that God has blessed us immensely here at Grace Fellowship Church.

[1:52] We've enjoyed unity, growth in grace, growth in numbers, spiritual maturity among members. There's a heart for truth and a heart for service here.

And with all of the blessing that God has showered down upon us, it would be easy for several things to happen. It would be easy for us to become proud.

It would be easy for us to become complacent. It would be easy for us to cling to a form of godliness and religion while very quietly and almost imperceptibly the reality and power of that godliness slipped away.

Do you know what? God doesn't want that to happen here. He doesn't want us to be proud or complacent or to cling to a dead corpse of religion.

He wants us to be humble and holy, empowered, alive, worshippers of him. And so time and again, it seems, in the last weeks and months, we have been confronted with the danger, the reality of danger arising from within the church.

[3:12] We've gotten it from every angle, it seems like. We've been warned of empty faith that produces no change of life. Warned about false teachers and deceivers and troublemakers in the church and the danger of being led astray.

We've seen the importance of the truth and of zeal. And even this morning, the danger of trying to be friends with both the world and with God. And how those in the church cannot be.

We didn't plan to gang up on you. That's from three different teachers teaching on three different or four different things. We didn't say, I'm going to get them with James. Okay, I'll get them with 2 Timothy. And I'll get them with Ryle and 2 John.

And we're going to pile up on you. And keep giving you warnings about danger within the church. That wasn't the plan. But it was God's plan for us to receive all of these warnings after warnings after warnings.

And tonight, we have another warning. So please don't be discouraged or bored with something that you've heard before. Be thankful that God loves us and cares for us so much that He's again drawing our attention to the danger so that we might avoid it in our own lives, the lives of others around us, and the life of our church.

[4:34] We want to see tonight that there will be terrible times. That there's something that we must do in those terrible times. And we want to see what will come of it all.

What will happen? Terrible times, what you must do in those times, and then what will happen? We'll spend most of our time on the first. And you see it there in verse 1. But mark this, there will be

terrible times in the last days.

Now some think Paul's warning is for a future time, the end times. The last days. A time that hasn't yet arrived. But that is simply not the case. The things that are described here in these verses are described as a present danger.

And then at the end of verse 5, Timothy is told to have nothing to do with them. That exhortation wouldn't be necessary if it was just a future problem. Well, the scriptures speak of the last days as the time between the two comings of Christ.

Paul and Timothy were living in the last days. And you and I are living in the last days. It's not just a time at the very end before the second coming of Christ.

[5 : 42] And Paul says during those last days there will be particular periods of difficulty, of struggle. There will be terrible or difficult times in those last days.

Timothy was enduring such a time in Ephesus. We look back at the history of the church and we see that such times ebb and flow. They come and go. Sometimes things are worse. And there's more things and people that are characterized by what we read of here.

And other times there is less of these difficulties in the church. But towards the end of the last days those times will increase and grow worse. And the times are terrible or difficult because of the wicked people in those times.

And not just the people out in the world. Wicked people right within the church. There will be people destroying themselves and others.

And so such times, Calvin says, will require in the pastors uncommon fidelity, diligence, watchfulness, prudence, and unwearied constancy. We ought to arouse our hearts for resistance.

[6 : 48] That's why we're here tonight. May God give your pastors and may give all of us as a part of this church vigilance and guarding against the danger that could so easily consume us and destroy us.

What is that danger? Well, it's people. Verse 1, there will be terrible times in these last days. Verse 2, people. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money.

There's a long list of things that people will be. And that list from verses 2 through 4 is bookended with misguided love. That's the controlling thought here.

You see at the beginning of verse 2, they will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money. And then at the very end of verse 4, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. The terrible times will be brought on by people who are misguided in their love.

They love self. They are those who don't heed the command of Christ. The command of Christ is to love God and to love our neighbor as ourself.

[7 : 58] But we tend to take that love of self and move it to the top of the list. You ever have the tendency to think of yourself first, of your own well-being, prosperity, wants, and needs?

We're born self-centered. The problem in the church arises is when the people in the church forget that we've been reoriented not to be self-centered, but to be Christ-centered and other-centered to put them first.

So beware of this possibility that our central focus and love is shifting away from God and back to ourselves. It might seem like a little thing to allow a little self-love to go unchecked.

No big deal. But I want you to watch with me and see where it goes as we progress through this passage tonight. There'll be lovers of self, and one manifestation of that will be a love of money. There'll be lovers of money. Such people, since they love themselves, love to spend their money on themselves. And if you are consumed with money and what it can buy, rather than being eager and excited for the kingdom and how you can be a part of advancing it, you're being warned.

[9 : 10] Understanding that something of that was taught in Sunday school today. I was teaching a different class. But lovers of money will be one of the things that mark people.

And then we skip down to the other misguided love at the end of verse 4. They're lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Some people in these difficult times will focus their love on whatever it is that makes them feel good.

Pleasure. Whether it's emotional or physical or psychological pleasure. If you find yourself consumed with pleasure, I want you to remember tonight that pleasure is the thing that chokes out the word.

When the seed is sown on thorny ground, the thorns that choke it out are pleasures of the world. And if you're consumed with pleasure, it'll choke out the word. Pleasure is what once enslaved us.

Titus 3.3 Our pleasures are what cause fights and quarrels among us. James 4. That our desires waging war in us. In James 4.1 That's the same word.

[10:11] Pleasure. Pursuing our own pleasure. If you love pleasure rather than God, you're embracing something that can destroy you. And the church that you're in.

Here are three idols that we have a tendency to put in the place of God. Self. Money. And pleasure. We're not going to turn there, but if you read Romans 1, the second half of Romans 1, you see that there's a great exchange that people make.

They exchange the truth for a lie. They exchange the worship of the Creator for the worship of created things. And what follows for those people is a list of vices there at the end of Romans 1. All sorts of wickedness. And that's the very same thing that we have here in 2 Timothy 3. People, instead of being lovers of God or lovers of pleasure, and what it produces is all of this wickedness described for us in verses 2 and 3.

If you love pleasure rather than God, if you worship the wrong thing, you'll be characterized by all of this wickedness. Do you see the danger of pleasure loving?

[11:18] You get consumed with the pleasure of food or sex or the high of drugs or the forgetfulness that comes with drunkenness. And so you expend your energy and your effort on pursuing that pleasure.

And it becomes all-consuming to you until you've replaced God on the throne with that particular delight of your life. You can't focus on reading His Word because you're thinking of the next fulfillment of your desire.

Or anticipating the next. Or thinking on the last time your desire was fulfilled. Listening to preaching is impossible because you're distracted by your need for pleasure. And you're not delighting in the God who's being held before you.

Pleasure is choking out the Word. Trying to worship God is impossible. It's a joke because you love something so much more than Him. And so you come to church and you wonder why your heart is cold.

And why you don't understand what people mean when they talk about delighting in God. Well, pleasure, if something else is filling your heart. You see, whatever you love or whatever you treasure will control your behavior.

[12:26] If this is what you love, then you will do whatever it takes to give this. But if you treasure God, if you love Him, if you worship Him, you will be in His control. And so He says people are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

And here is what should mark the church and the people in it. A love for God. A love that's radical. A love that is insatiable.

It's our highest duty, the greatest commandment. And it should be, friends, our greatest delight to love God. And so if we find we're neglecting our greatest duty and delight for a little pleasure, then we're loving and worshiping the wrong thing.

We must not leave this unchecked. We must not let it go unrepented of in our lives. We've sung of God. We've seen something of His goodness tonight.

And how we should delight in Him. He's so worthy of our love and our worship. He's great. He is majestic. He is loving. He is caring for your particular needs.

[13:33] Not just in general, but for you in particular. He is comforting. He is supporting. He is sustaining. He is faithful. He is forgiving. He is merciful.

He is acting powerfully on your behalf. And He has more grace. He's worthy of our love, our adoration, our worship. And if you can't love God or delight in Him, maybe your love of something else has clouded your vision of God.

Other pleasures can never satisfy us, but they can lessen the glory of what ought to be the greatest pleasure. If you look for pleasure elsewhere because you're not finding it in God, then when you do go back and try to find it in God, He won't seem so great anymore.

Friend of the world can't be a friend of God. And so if you've buddied up with worldly pleasure, and then you wonder why you can't delight in God, you shouldn't wonder. It's because you're delighting in the wrong thing.

And that is taking the place of God. The world has duped many, including many in the church, into thinking that God isn't enough. That He's not worthy of that delight.

[14 : 39] And so it holds out all of these other things that are worthy of our time, attention and our affection. And so when you go looking to satisfy your needs in ice cream, or in pornography, or more exciting worship that makes you feel better, you're admitting that God is not enough for you.

That He is not sufficient. That you need something more than Him. Such is the nature of misguided love. You can see why it results in terrible times.

Look at the things that it produces. In the rest of these verses, we'll just hardly be able to mention these things. The wickedness that comes from misguided love, it starts with pride and mistreatment of others.

There will be boasting and pride in verse 2, and conceit or being puffed up in verse 4. And those are things that are the natural outworking of loving ourself. We saw it again this morning, that the self-centered one is the one who's a friend of the world, and He's a prideful one.

If we love ourself, we'll think highly of ourself, and be proud, and we'll let others know about it by our boasting. Our heads will swell up with conceit. Watch for these things as signs that you've got an idol in your heart, that you're worshipping.

[15 : 53] If you find yourself proud, you need to take a look back, and see if your love has been misdirected towards something else. And then with the pride comes mistreatment of others. We become abusive or slanderous in the way we speak.

Speaking ill of others. As our opinion of ourself goes up, our opinion of others goes down. And that begins to be reflected in the way we speak to them and about them. A proud person is not far from being an abusive or slanderous person who condemns others, but doesn't see his own wickedness. And then the next step is treachery. Verse 4, Such people become treacherous or betrayers.

Traitors. It's the word that's used to describe Judas.

He was treacherous. As they slip even further, they become like him. Judas loved himself and he loved money more than he loved his master, didn't he?

And so he begins to have an inflated opinion of himself. And so when he sees a woman who loves God, who loves Jesus so much that she's willing to spend probably everything that she had in that vial of alabaster and the nard, the perfume in it and anoint Jesus' feet, she loved her Savior that much.

[17 : 12] Judas, who is so clouded with love for money, can't comprehend that kind of love for God. And so what comes out of his mouth is slander of that woman.

He speaks ill of her. You see the connection. He should be loving God. He's not. He's loving money and so he can't understand this love for God and so he's full of himself and how self-righteous he is and how wicked this woman is when in reality, she was the righteous one.

And then what's the next step for Judas? He goes and he betrays his Lord. Such people, verse 4, are rash. They are reckless. They act and speak without thinking.

They're so full of themselves that they don't see a need to take into consideration what their words and actions will mean for others. And so they act without thinking about what the implications are for others.

This love of self and pleasure rather than love for God then devolves into all sorts of wickedness. Disobedience to parents, verse 2. Of course, if pleasure is your idol, if that's the thing that you're pursuing, if that's what you want, and mom and dad are standing in the way of it, then you're going to disobey them.

[18 : 22] Parents, see if you can't trace some disobedience back to some idol on the throne of your child's heart. The love of pleasure. People will be ungrateful.

These people who have been given so much but don't acknowledge the gifts of God and of others because their opinion of themselves is so high that they think they deserve all of these good things that they have.

And so they're not thankful for them. They believe they're entitled to them. So they're ungrateful. They're unholy or irreligious. They're not just disrespectful to parents but also to God. As love for the world grows, as friendship with the world increases, love for God and His law which limits your access to the pleasures of the world and forbids access to those things.

Your love for Him and His law fades and so you grow unholy. Irreligious. Such people are without love. They lack normal human affection. Verse 3. Love for self eventually results in no love for others around you.

Such people are unforgiving or irreconcilable. If you want to make peace with them, they're unwilling to be reconciled. They don't need peace with you.

[19:31] They are, again, slanderous. Verse 3. They're malicious gossips. The word is devil. They're devils. They're more like Him than God.

They love the thrill of speaking ill of others, passing on that juicy tidbit of damaging information about someone else, loving how good it makes them look. They are without self-control.

They are brutal. They are savage. They'll do whatever it takes to feed their pleasure, to worship their idol. And of course, they're not lovers of the good. Such people are enemies of what is good. That's quite a list. Let's pull back. We'll catch our breath for a moment. We're talking about the kinds of people who will cause trouble for the church. They may not be marked by all of these things. It only takes one of these things to make a man wicked and a danger to the church. And so if you look at your life as you look at this list and you see just one of these things, and especially one of these things that we tend to let go so unchecked, but is at the root of all the others, this misguided love, don't trifle with it.

[20:38] And if you see some of these other wicked marks, don't just try to eliminate the particular problem. Trace it back to the source. Don't just pick off the bad fruit. Get to the root. Get underneath and see what's in your heart. See that your love and your worship have been misdirected and misguided.

What has replaced God on the throne of your heart? What do you love more than Him? If you can say, if this, whatever it is, if X, if this was taken from me, I could find no comfort in God, then you found your idol.

The text mentions self, money, and pleasure as such things. I want to mention a couple others just to get your thoughts turning to see how you can trace back some presenting sins to the root of them in your heart.

And for so much of what I've already said and I'm about to say I'm indebted to Ted Tripp, this idea of tracing sin back to idols in the heart. He's, of course, indebted to the Scriptures, but he's been very helpful in understanding some of these things.

But I want to talk about four other idols. There's three here. Love of self, money, and pleasure. Four other ones that might be a problem for us. First of all, for men.

[21:50] Some men worship the idol of achievement. My life only has meaning if I achieve great things and am recognized for it by my peers, by my superiors, and by my family.

They thrive. They worship the idea of being able to care for and support their family, to reach that level of achievement, and to have others dependent upon them.

And this is the type of person for whom the loss of job would be utterly devastating because they've made a God out of this achievement, this ability that they have.

And when that is taken away and they're cast back upon God Himself, they find that they haven't put their hope and trust in God. They're worshiping something else. Maybe for you ladies, the idol for men, but we'll do one for men, one for women, one for young people, and one for elderly people tonight.

One possible idol for ladies is family. My life only has meaning if things are well with my husband and children. If I ever lost one of them, my life would be over.

[23:06] So maybe your husband's saying, my wife is always cranky. She's always discontent. She's always sad. You say, stop being discontent. Be content. Be happy. Don't be cranky anymore.

But there's something more you've got to get at the root of the matter. Is it because you've made such an idol of things going well with your family that when they don't go well, you can't find happiness in the Lord and joy in Him.

You've worshipped the wrong thing. An idol that young people worship often is that of approval. And older people as well.

My life has meaning only if I have the approval of... And you fill in the blank. The name of the person. The group of people. And so parents begin to see anger and rebellion and fighting and their children behaving differently and dressing differently.

And they say, stop behaving that way. Stop dressing that way. Stop doing these things. And they haven't gotten at the root and seen that their children are worshipping the idol of approval of other men.

[24:10] And that's why they're doing these things. They're trying to get to that approval. Maybe for the elderly, the idol is independence. My life only has meaning if I can handle life without the assistance of others.

Find serious depression many times in elderly people who have become dependent on others because they've made such an idol of it. I don't mean to make light. It is a difficult thing to lose your independence.

I've watched grandparents do it. My own grandparents. And it's difficult. But if you've made an idol of that and your hope is not in the Lord and Him, then that will be devastating.

Because the one thing that you've so worshipped is taken away. And everything else comes unglued. We could go on and on. Ted Tripp has a list and it's alphabetized of potential idols. And that's just four out of his whole list. But maybe that gets your thoughts stirring. Those things aren't right here, but the concept of worshipping the wrong thing is here. And so I want you to start thinking as you look and you see various problems in your life and presenting sins, see if you can trace them back to some idol.

[25:18] Something that you're worshipping in your heart. Well, these people that create such difficulty and problems in the last days are summed up in verse 5.

They have a form of godliness but deny its power. Having the outward form of godliness is like having a body without the soul. It's dead.

All you have is a corpse. John Stott says it was form without power, outward show without inward reality, religion without morals, faith without works.

Maybe you know someone like that. Maybe you've begun to see it in your own heart. People who have been baptized partake of the Lord's Supper. They regularly attend the carefully ordered worship of God in the church.

They have God often on their lips. They speak of religious, spiritual things. They participate in service inside and outside the church.

[26:21] They hold to the confession of the church. And all of these things are good. And don't misunderstand as we talk about this tonight. We dare not abandon the proper forms of religion. There is a reason that we worship the way we do.

The things that we, the energies into which we pour our love for God, it needs, we don't dare abandon the form of religion. We need to give it structure and direction to the life and power within us.

You know, kids have boundless energy, it seems, and they need some forms to direct that energy into. They need some structured projects or things to do where they can funnel and channel that energy.

And so it is in the church. This energy, this power, it needs form. Don't despise form. The problem Paul is talking about, though, is when there is only the form and no power.

Now, the opposite could be a problem if you've got power and no form. But that's not the one Paul's talking about here. And I want you to ask yourself, do you face this danger? Do we face it here? We love our forms.

[27:24] We disdain the frivolous forms of other churches. And again, it's good and necessary to have the right forms, but do we have the power?

Since just in our singing tonight, that many, if not all of you, do know something of the power of true religion. And I delight to sit in the front and hear your voices singing.

But check your heart. Do you have the power, the real thing? Do you know the presence of the Spirit in your life and in your worship? We've got such good hymns.

Do you know what they mean? Does the truth of them move you? When you sing about God, are you thrilled with love for Him? Is your singing fueled by love for Him? Or is it just empty words going through the motions, mindless?

The love of the world is crowded out the love of God, and so when you get here, it's just sort of without power. What we do here should be changing our lives and the lives of those around us.

[28:29] Is it? If we have the form but deny the power, we're like the people described in Jude 12, clouds without rain, blown along by the wind, autumn trees without fruit and uprooted, twice dead.

This kind of so-called godliness brings shame to the name of Christ and it isn't godliness at all. It's useless and God is not pleased by it. I hope you're not here each Lord's Day just going through the motions.

If so, you'll find that soon instead of becoming more and more like Christ, having more love towards God, our great Creator and Redeemer, loving Him and longing to worship Him, you'll be moving in the opposite direction.

God won't seem as great to you as He once did. Holiness, that's a nice idea, but it's not really worth pursuing with all of my heart. I'm going to give some of my heart to pursuing a little sin, a little pleasure.

It's not going to hurt. A little love of self, a little love of money. You see, it's so subtle. You think you're fine because you do church. You've got the form. But if it stops there and it doesn't stay with you throughout the week and if someone were to ask you why you come here each Sunday and you couldn't come up with a good answer, then you're in danger of having an empty religion, friends.

[29:47] Spurgeon says you can't be nourished by a painting of food. That's pretty. It's a form. But it's not the real thing. You can't be warmed up by the painting of a fire, he says, and neither, friends, can we be changed by a form of religion that denies its power.

You go down to a morgue, there's cold, dead corpses. And I think most of us would shudder to embrace a cold, dead corpse, but a lot of people are willing to embrace cold, dead religion. They have a form that makes them feel better, but there's no power. May it not be so here. May God guard us and keep us. And so there'll be troublesome times, terrible times in the last days if people are characterized by these things and they're coming from within the church, what danger it must be.

But sadly, the danger doesn't stop there because some of them, not all of them, but some of them will not be content with ruining themselves. Verse 6 says, out of these, everybody we've just described in verses 1-5, out of them, verse 6, will come some who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women and so on.

That's why we must be so careful not to tolerate this kind of behavior in the church. We must always be watching for it. First in ourselves. Is there any of this in me? Could I be in danger of becoming this?

[31:14] And then also watching for it in others as well. Because some will try to take their corruption and feed it to others. And take others down with them.

And I want us to notice here the kind of people that they pray on. Weak-willed women who are loaded down with sins, swayed by all kinds of evil, always learning, but never able to acknowledge the truth.

Literally, little women. And it's used in a derogatory sense here, not a Louisa May Alcott kind of sense. Okay? And it means immature, weak.

And the picture is of a salesman who intentionally comes to or calls the home when the husband isn't there to take advantage of the poor, weak, little lady.

And I got home the other day and my wife said, somebody called today and they were asking for money and she wasn't weak-willed. She stood her ground. She didn't give them a dime, even when they kept pushing.

[32:17] But she said, you know, I think they call in the afternoon on purpose when the husband's not home to get the wife and see if they can pressure them into doing something.

They'll prey on weak women. They'll prey on the elderly trying to take advantage of them. A couple of years ago, my grandparents, my grandfather was still at home then and my grandmother was still driving then.

She had an old beater car and my parents had only made sure that they kept collision insurance on it and that was it because it wasn't worth having full insurance on. And the insurance company called the house when only grandpa was home and asked him if he wanted full coverage.

It was time to renew full coverage or just collision. He wants full coverage, man. He wants that car taken care of and so my parents just, oh no, the insurance price goes up and two weeks later my grandmother totaled the car and she was fine and the insurance company didn't get the best end of that deal but they preyed on the, on the, they were praying on the weak and it came back to bite them in that case but you see that's what these kinds of people do.

They come after the weak minded. Those who aren't able to resist. It's what, it's how the whole story started in the Garden of Eden.

[33:44] Satan came after Eve. But I don't think just women or elderly, weak women or elderly people need to be in view here. It's anyone who's immature and weak.

Those susceptible to false teaching can include men. And they're described here and we don't have time to dwell here but they're those who are, they're easy targets.

You look around the church and you can pick them out, they're loaded down with sin, they're struggling with guilt, they're making slow with any progress in sanctification, they're easy target. And so the one, this wicked person, verses 1-5 finds that and they say I think I can take that person down with me. I can make them feel guiltier and guilt them into doing whatever it is that I say is right.

And they're swayed by all sorts of evil desires, maybe a desire to be righteous like these other people in the church but they don't want to do the work to get their desire to be well thought of.

[34 : 43] All sorts of evil desires sway them but they're weak minded and so this person praying, trying to tear them down, can play on those desires and pull them away from the truth.

They're always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. They move from one teaching to another but never land in the right place. Very simply they're not grounded. They're not solid Christians. They're those who struggle and have struggled for their whole walk.

They're blown about instead of being fixed and firm. That's the kind of people that are in danger of being targeted by these wicked people in these dangerous times. And so these troublemakers find their target and they move in.

They worm their way in. It's deceptive. It's subtle. Sometimes it's malicious. They target these weak ones. They give them something to read with a hearty recommendation.

They sow that seed of doubt. You really think what the pastor said the other day was right? Do you really think it's necessary to be trying so hard to be holy? I see that you're weighed down with all of this guilt.

[35 : 46] You really don't need to be. You've got too high of a standard. They're easy to sway.

Other times it may be merely by example. These ones described in verses 1-5 might not be malicious, but this weak-minded person in the church looks at that person over there and they say, well, that guy, he's a good, solid Christian and he has a really bad temper, so it must be okay if I do as well.

Just by example, they begin to destroy the church. That person, they're a good Christian, but they gossip all the time and they slander other people and talk evil about them, so it must be okay for me to do it.

You see how this weak-minded person is so susceptible to the attacks or just the example of these wicked people in verses 1-5. And sometimes the troublemakers might not come from within the doors of this particular church, but from the broader church and they worm their way into homes via TV and books and magazines and these weak-minded ones watch some wretched religious programming on TV and they're suckered in and they listen to false teachers and they begin to believe and their services are so many more people at their church and their services are so much more exciting and their pastor is more engaging and so they begin to get suckered in and it's wormed their way into the home by way of the TV or they pick up a book that Oprah was raving about because it was about spirituality.

You know what? That's paganism, that book. And it has nothing to do with Christianity and it's contrary to it, but these things are worming their way and they're having their effect on the weak-minded.

They get their latest Christian book magazine, they're excited to find the modern-day equivalent of Pilgrim's Progress. There's a new allegory out for the Christian life. You know what?

[37 : 41] The shack is a sham. It's not true religion or Christianity. Don't waste your time on it. They hear on TV that all religions are equal. They begin to doubt the exclusive claims of Christ.

They pick up a Christian. I didn't have that many of my notes. It's just there once. A Christian romance novel. It makes them wish that their life or husband was more ideal and romantic and it leads to discontent.

Ladies, men, don't be duped by this garbage. Don't let it worm its way into your house. You're being taken captive. That's what these troublemakers want. They want to take you captive.

They are those of corrupt mind and they want to corrupt your mind. They are opposed to the truth. Just as Janus and Jamborees opposed Moses, so also these men opposed the truth.

You see, the danger is that they come as though they're presenting the truth. Here's the truth.

Here's a new way of looking at the truth. A new way of describing the truth. A more exciting version of the truth.

[38:52] But you know what? They're opposed to the truth. If they are trying to turn you away from a life of worship and love for God and holiness, then it's not the truth. And Janus and Jamborees opposing Moses in the Jewish literature, these are the names that were given to the magicians that Pharaoh had in his kingdom.

And so when Moses comes and he turns his staff into a snake, Janus and Jamborees come and they turn their rods into a snake. Those are the men that are in view here. And they were opposed to Moses, God's representative, God's spokesman for the truth.

They oppose the truth. And so do wicked people in difficult times. They oppose the truth. They are not on the side of the truth. And so we must be aware of them. We must watch for them.

We must guard against them. Well, that's point one. We just got two to go. There will be terrible times in the last days.

And it will be because of wicked people. And they will try to take others down with them. Be on your guard that you be not one of those wicked people and that you be not one of those weak minded people that are such a target for them.

[40:01] The second thing is given that there are terrible times, difficult times, what must we do? There's two commands here. Verses 1 and 5.

We'll start with one. But mark this. The command is no. Know this. Have knowledge about this. Mark it well.

You see, if we know that these things are going on, then we won't be caught off guard when it strikes close to home. Don't live your Christian life with your head buried in the sand. Remember, God wants us to remain faithful.

He's been giving us repeated warnings here at Grace Fellowship Church. We have no excuse. Let's not be ignorant Christians, dear people. Let's know the danger that's there and be ready to face it. It's dangerous for the church. Even if it's not people intentionally leading others astray, just that example of a wicked person is infectious. It'll spread like gangrene.

[41:00] No. Be aware of it. And the second thing we must do is to have nothing to do with them. In verse 5, the end of that section of what these people will be like, have nothing to do with them.

These things, the people who practice them must have no place in the church. And so if we see it in our church, in our own lives, we must deal with it. Don't have any part in it.

At the first sign of these things in your own heart, put them to death by the power of the Spirit dwelling in you. If you see the hints of love, of self, and love of money, and love of pleasure, or any other idol that's not God, rising in your heart, remember where the lead.

Remember what will come. See the great danger that's there and say God forgive me. And you go and the antidote to all of this, to this worshiping the wrong thing, is worshiping the right thing.

Delighting in God. I'm so glad that that's the theme of our worship tonight, is delighting in Him. And again, maybe that's hard for you. Maybe God doesn't seem that delightful for you.

[42:07] And if He doesn't, it's probably a sign that you're delighting in something else. And that is diminish your view of God. But here again, some from the Psalms. Psalm 1611, You have made known to me the path of life.

You will fill me with joy in your presence. Do you find joy in the presence of God? You should. That will make all of these other desires fade away. Psalm 34, verse 8, Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. You don't have to go pursue the worldly desires.

God will give you the desires of your heart that are good and right. We delight ourselves in Him.

Don't let the pleasure of God become dull, unfulfilling. So if you're struggling with that, you say, well, I'm delighting in something else that's clearing me because I don't delight in God.

Well, you need to get close to God again. You need to get back into His Word. You need to read a book about the cross of Christ and see how glorious He is and what Christ has done and what God has done for us in His Son.

[43:12] You need to get close to Him again and see that He's delightful. See that He's worthy. Don't have any part of that misguided love or worship.

If you know yourself to be one that tends to be weak-minded and susceptible to attacks, then get rooted in the truth. Stay away from TV evangelists and lousy books and read the good book.

Listen to messages from trusted pastors so that you won't be swayed. Stay away from churches even that are marked by these things.

Watch for it in your own heart. Have nothing to do with it. And then if someone in our midst is exhibiting these things, then we've got to go into Matthew 18 and we seek to bring them to repentance.

We go to them and we bring a couple of brothers along with us. And if they're unrepentant, it's ganging in the church. And we can have nothing to do with them.

[44 : 13] And the last step is to put them out of the church. So may we not have to do that here. May God bring any of us like this that are marked by these things to repentance. But that's what we'll have to do if there's no repentance.

Nothing to do with them. Well, what comes of it? Just briefly then. Look at verse 9. Or the end of verse 8 as well. So also these men impose the as concerned are rejected.

But they will not get very far because as in the case of those men, Janice and John Brees, their folly will be clear to everyone. What will come of these troublesome people in troublesome times?

They won't get very far, says Paul. It may seem like they are. Things do get bad. But eventually they're stopped. We see the cycle again and again in church history.

Wicked men arise and try to lead many astray. And some are led astray. And such men, verse 13, do progress from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived, but the church won't ever get to worst because these wicked people will become evident to those around them.

[45 : 24] They won't prevail against the church at large. They'll do damage along the way, but there's great comfort in knowing that no matter what great difficulty comes, God will stop them.

They will not get very far. Their folly should be clear to all of us. The magicians in Egypt were exposed when they couldn't do all the things that Moses, by the power of God, do.

It became evident. It became plain to everybody. And they didn't get very far, did they? And so, when we see such in our midst, we'll recognize it and tolerate it. That's why we've taken the time to see what people in difficult times will look like.

So we'll see it and not put up with it. Confront it. Need be, put it out. Let's be killing sin or be killing us. And so, if we know these things to be a danger, and if we know that men who participate in them, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected, then let us be doing the opposite.

Let us be growing and cultivating love for God so that other idols will fade. Let's make sure we don't go through the motions when we worship, but that we seek God's face and beg for the presence of the Spirit and for power.

[46 : 37] Let's be cultivating humility by seeing how great God is and how low we are. Let's be showing kindness to one another instead of slander and speaking evil and being abusive.

Let's be a people of obedience, of gratitude, of holiness, of love, of reconciliation, of self-control, of loving what is good, and peacemaking.

And if we've got the real thing, if we're pursuing that, then the counterfeit will be all the more evident in our midst and we'll be able to deal with it quicker so that it won't get very far.

But then when the last day comes, the last day of the last days, we're in the last days now, when the last day comes, the day of resurrection and judgment, the day when Christ comes again, these people will be seen for who they are as far as the faith is concerned, they are rejected.

They might say, Lord, we named your name. We were a part of the church. We had that form of religion. But they will be rejected concerning the faith.

[47 : 45] There will be no place for them in glory. They had no true faith. They caused other people to stumble and they will stumble in the last day. Don't be among them.

You come to Christ now so that that last day might be one of glory instead of terror for you. If you look at yourself, maybe you've never come to Christ at all. You don't make any profession of faith, but you see these things in yourself.

You know that you're an idolater. You can come to Christ and you can be forgiven and you can join this church. We're not perfect. We're imperfect and we struggle, but we're striving to worship God. You come join us as a worshiper of God and you can find forgiveness in Christ the Savior. Come to him tonight. Or, if you are a professing believer, but you look at verses 1 through 5 and you see much of yourself there, back to the cross.

God, forgive me. God, be merciful to me, the sinner. May we each come and be a greater and deeper lover and worshiper of God rather than lovers of ourselves.

[48 : 52] Let's pray together. our Father, we thank you that you give us warnings in your word. And we thank you that you've brought them repeatedly to us.

We thank you that you love us that much to warn us. May we see the danger and may we flee from it. May we not be marked by hearts that are cold because we're worshipping the wrong thing.

When we come into this place, may we know power as we worship. May we know that power in putting sin to death in our lives. May our religion not be empty and cold. May we not be worshipping other idols in our hearts instead of the one true and living God.

Show yourself great and glorious to us. You have in your scripture. You do each day in sustaining us and caring for us. Give us eyes that would see it and run out in love and worship to you.

Help us to lay aside love of self and money and pleasure and worship only you. Make us a people that are faithful, that are not marked by these things, but are strong and firm against any attack that come.

[50 : 02] We can only do this by the strength of Christ our Savior. And so we pray that you would empower us by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us. Help us. Give us grace that we might remain until the end bringing honor and glory to your name in the earth.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, let's take our hymnals and turn to hymnals. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.