



On The Frontier



“For The Glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

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Troubles Will Come

It is a troubled world that we live in, which comes as no surprise to those of us who love God's Word. Why? Because God tells us in His Word that troubles will come. And as we approach the end of the age they shall increase in frequency and intensity. What happens in this present age is not nearly so important to us as is our behavior. The world may be full of pitfalls but nothing mandates our stepping into them. How we avoid doing so is as simple as being obedient to God and His Word.

Proverbs 1:10-17

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:

Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:

We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:

Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:

My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

There are different types of devices used to capture animals. Most of them have deadly conclusions or at the least the loss of freedom. Be it a net, snare, dead-fall or pit, guile is a must. Clearly, if I wish to net a bird, I must be discreet in my spreading of the net. If the bird knows there is a net, or anything dangerous to its well-being and freedom, it will absolutely avoid contact. This is no mystery to the trapper. In the pursuit of fur-bearing animals the Northwest trapper will boil the traps prior to placing them to remove any sent which might alert the animal to the danger.

If we take heed to the instructions set forth in God's magnificent Word, we should be evidently aware of the dangerous consequences affixed to sin. Being so equipped guarantees us safety in our Christian walk.

It's difficult to imagine someone so naive as to not consider the ramifications of evil doing. But daily the ignorant are taken as prey. The Adversary is clever and ever scheming for ways to trap the unwary.

Ignorance will serve little to soften the sting of sin. Nothing advances the cause of security more efficiently than and obedient reverence towards God and His Word. This is of course impossible without at least a basic knowledge of the Bible. Hence, those of us so instructed have a tremendous reason to hold forth the Truth.

Isaiah 57:20

But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

Proverbs 30:11-14

There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and *yet* is not washed from their filthiness.

There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

Proverbs 4:14-18

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall.

For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

None of us are as adept to deal with nature as a wild animal, nor are we as attentive to our surroundings. Yet, even the wisest fox can be snared if the snare is concealed properly. That being the case, consider the danger for those who have had their "senses" dulled by apathy.

Observe the following admonition:

Hebrews 5:8-14

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use [*hexis* = habit] have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Use is the optimum word here! The Word of God will work us little good if we don't do as we are instructed. To grow in this regard one must **DO** the Word, that is live it habitually. We cannot be a one-day-a-week-Sunday-go-to-meeting Christian and

expect to be proficient in spiritual discernment. There is no profit to the slacker in either spiritual or material affairs! Apathy and insensitivity to the things of God will take its toll.

Hebrews 4:1-10

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh *day* from all his works.

And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

His work and not ours must be tenaciously retained as it is the **ONLY** viable foundation for a relationship with the Him.

Ephesians 2:1-9

And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Faith then and not works is the order of the day! This we must always remember or we will never find ourselves entering into God's rest.

That being the case, it becomes evident that a primary snare is anything that repudiates God's grace. This deception can come in a manner so subtle as to trick even the most clever child of God.

Luke 16:8b

... for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

The Bible in Basic English renders the above in the following manner:

... for the sons of this world are wiser in relation to their generation than the sons of light.

The Weymouth version gives it this way:

... for, in relation to their own contemporaries, the men of this age are shrewder than the sons of Light.

Why is this? Because a son of God does not spend every waking hour in pursuit of personal gain. The men of this age are well versed, "street wise" if you will, in their dealings with others. They "rack their brains" so as to improve their dishonest dealings. They practice their craft to develop and polish their evil ways.

Let's not forget where the motivation for this comes from.

Genesis 3:1, 13

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

No wonder God had the Apostle Paul to record the following:

II Corinthians 11:3

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

We need God to help us, for left to our own devices we remain inadequate.

Psalms 119:133

Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

We must strife also to remain ever watchful lest we be lulled to sleep and thus foiled.

Mark 14:38

Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

I Corinthians 16:13

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Colossians 4:2

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

I Thessalonians 5:6

Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

I Peter 4:7

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

With God's help we can abide watchful, sober and informed. Just like

the bird of Proverbs 1:17, "in vain the net will be spread in our sight."

As mentioned previously, the repudiation of grace is a common pitfall. The doctrine of works is presented with as much faulty logic as necessary in order to sell it. This may be done cleverly but not so cleverly as to avoid the spiritually discerning eye.

Galatians 1:6

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Paul was astounded at how easily the saints in Galatia were talked out of grace.

Galatians 2:16

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

The Galatians knew the above truth at one point. Yet, they allowed themselves to be talked out of it. They stepped into the pitfall set before them. Somehow they found the idea of returning to the weak and beggarly elements more appealing than the grace of God. It's hard to imagine that they desired bondage over freedom, but obviously they did.

Colossians 2:6-23

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him:

Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility

and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

(Touch not; taste not; handle not;

Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

It is indisputable from the above record (and numerous others in God's Word) that it is men who beguile. It is the commandments and doctrines of men that are perishable and unsatisfying. It is the following of man and man's ways that leads us to misery, disappointment and catastrophe.

This is not new to Christianity, God or the Devil. But it is every bit as hurtful and deadly as it ever was.

Consider this excerpt from the Lord Jesus Christ's prayer.

John 17:18-23

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

It is manifestly evident that Jesus prayed in accordance with God's Will. What he prayed for as declared in the above record was unity and love.

God answered His Son's prayer but some have not honored the authenticity of this answer.

I Corinthians 12:20-27

But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

One body with no schism and all the members having the same care one for another! This is the Will of God! But this has not been the history of Christianity. Division has been enthroned, not unity. Why? Because men have rallied around the name of men!

I Corinthians 1:10-13

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

The saints at Corinth were reprov'd for elevating one man above another. This sinful foolishness was and is cause for much pain, consternation and anguish. It is always a blatant denial of God's answered prayer to His Son. Division in the Church directly opposes the will of God.

When schisms are produced, those that produce them differ little in practice from the one who first contradicted God.

God said, "... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

The Serpent said, "... Ye shall not surely die."

Jesus prayed that we who believe would all be one. He broke down the wall of partition making one new man of Jew and Gentile reconciling both unto God in one body. How say some among us, "I am of Paul or I am of Apollos?" Is this not a flagrant contradiction of God's Will?

Furthermore, with this type of behavior in practice, it is impossible to grow in grace. This is a delight to our Enemy as it is a sure way to stifle the furtherance of the Gospel and deny God the worship He deserves. It is carnal and as such earthly, sensual and devilish.

I Corinthians 3:1-4

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, *I am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

No matter how convincing a follower of "man" may appear, they are NOT spiritual. What they are is carnal. Why? Because they do not walk according to the Scripture, they walk according to man.

A true minister of Christ is faithful and does not judge or live in collaboration with man's day.

I Corinthians 4:1-7

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of *men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

We are not to think of men above that which is written (the Word), nor be puffed up one against another. When we do this we are carnal and become the captured quarry of the Devil. We are snared by our own sinful actions.

The world looks at this and Christianity becomes a laughingstock, God gets a "black eye" and the Gospel of deliverance stagnates in our grasp.

II Corinthians 6:1-3

We then, *as workers together with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

Giving no offence [cause for others to stumble or sin] in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

These are our marching orders, workers together!

Any division, even the slightest, is cause for some to stumble and be led into sin. So why would any leader or minister be the cause of such things?

Note what Paul recorded regarding Diotrephes.

III John 9-11

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the

preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

The desire for preeminence! The love to be first in rank and influence! This dear family, is NOT the love of God. But it is the motivation for many in positions considered to be prominent. Prominence being totally subjective, of course.

You probably remember Simon the sorcerer and how he gave out that he himself was some great one. How godly was that? When this concept is communicated you can be sure that the entire message is contaminated.

Adding fuel to the fire, proliferation of this "great one" idea is encouraged. This worsens the folly and brings about sin upon sin.

II Corinthians 10:12-18

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

I vote for godly wisdom. How about you?

Romans 16:17 and 18

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

We are to mark, that is observe or note, those who cause divisions and offences. And we are to avoid or turn away from them. We are not to treat them badly but we are not to act in concert with that type of endeavor.

The motive of these individuals is set forth in the next verse, as is the reason for our moving away from them.

Verse 18:

For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Romans 12:9 and 10

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

We are to love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to have pity and kindness. We are to bless one another and speak no guile. But we are to avoid evil. When it comes to those who would turn us away from the gospel of the grace of God and the one body of Christ, we are to move away from them.

I Thessalonians 5:22

Abstain from all appearance of evil.

I Peter 3:8-11

Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, be courteous:

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

We must study God's Word and rightly divide it to stand approved before Him. But when it comes to an open door of empty discussion (profane and vain babblings) we are not to get involved. We are to move to the side and avoid such discussions as they will drive us toward

ungodliness. They promote works and sense knowledge ways of worship.

Titus 3:9 and 10

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

The Greek word for "avoid" is *periistemi*, which means to be a bystander. A bystander watches from a distance. He or she does not get directly involved. As for the word reject, it is translated from the Greek word *paraiteomai*, which simply means excuse yourself and leave. When you observe that which is leading to division, you excuse yourself and leave. Under no circumstance should you get involved! That is the pitfall that many fall into.

A heretick is one who is schismatic or divisive. A heretick offers a choice other than the doctrine regarding the grace of God and the revelation of the one body of Christ. God says that after gently calling their error to their attention twice, we are to excuse ourselves and avoid them.

When foolish questions arise about the Word of God and contentions and fights arise regarding the law, we are not to get directly involved. We are to stand aside. These questions are unprofitable according to God's Word and they are empty (vain). If God thought it necessary to tell a leader like Titus to avoid foolish questions, what about us? If God thought it necessary to warn Titus about contentions and strivings regarding the law, what about us?

II Thessalonians 3:14 and 15

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and

have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

The object of their being ashamed is that they may be conscience stricken and repent.

Verse 15:

Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Under no circumstance are we to be harsh or cruel! You simply turn aside as a bystander. You just don't get involved with those who promote divisive doctrines that move you away from the truth of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

We are to be joined together in the same mind and judgement. We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Boy has that not happened! We Christians have failed horribly in this regard. Ever since the contention that arose in the first century there has been division. You can read about that in the Book of Acts. So then, what are we to do? We are to strive to keep the unity of the spirit and yet there are doctrinal divisions that will not be resolved. No this will not change now, not until the Lord himself returns. Whatever then are we to do???

It's simple really. Make it a point to never, ever, cause a division. Never put a stumbling block in your brother's way. That is, never do anything that would lead anyone into sin. And being divisive is sinful. We do not want to be like Balaam who taught Balac how to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication. What an offense! Balaam became the poster boy for sin. This is not an enviable position.

Our lives are important and their impact immeasurable. But this life we

now live is short. We cannot afford to get caught up in strife. We simply do not have the time for it. Consequently, I've made it a point in my life to never be a part of anything that even resembles schism. Rather, I do my best to lead people to God. My sole desire in this regard is to encourage others to worship Him and respect His Word. Even if you don't agree with what I present as biblical doctrine you are still exhorted to enhance your relationship with Him.

On another personal note, I have seen where division and strife has caused others to doubt the very existence of God. I have seen where these things so damage the belief systems of those involved that they abandon their Bibles. Years go by and they still have difficulty trusting the Word and those who teach it. They view all Bible teachers as guilty, even those who've never taken part in hurtful practices. What a terrible state to be in! Shame on those who engender such things and teach others to do likewise!

Luke 17:1 and 2

Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him*, through whom they come!

It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Offences must come, it is inevitable! And just what is an offence? An offence is the movable stick or trigger of a trap. It is a snare! Any impediment placed in the way of another which causes them to stumble or fall is an offence. The Word often refers to offences as stumbling blocks and we are not to put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall

in our brother's way. Let it never be said of us that we have entrapped our brethren or helped to draw them into error and sin.

From Young's Literal Translation:

Luke 17:1 and 2

And he said unto the disciples, 'It is impossible for the stumbling blocks not to come, but woe to him through whom they come;

it is more profitable to him if a weighty millstone is put round about his neck, and he hath been cast into the sea, than that he may cause one of these little ones to stumble.

That troubles will come is inescapable but woe unto those who bring them!

II Timothy 3:12-ff

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

God has given us His Word that we may be fully equipped lacking nothing. Troubles will come but so will the Lord Jesus Christ someday! And what a day that will be!

Continue in God's Word for it alone is able to make you wise unto salvation and it alone is profitable for instruction in right living!

Troubles will come, but woe unto those that bring them!
