

THEME: Avoid all ungodliness at all costs all the time.

As a Volunteer Chaplain in the jails around California, I would often begin my sermons to the inmates with something like this:

"Men ... tonight you have the monumental task of determining whether or not I'm actually a false prophet who is trying to deceive you so that you'll end up in Hell forever ... or ... if I'm teaching you the truth of God so that you'll be saved from the wrath that is to come. Your soul is at stake! Based on your ability to discern spiritual truth and error, you'll end up in either Heaven or Hell ... so you'd better get it right!"

Both before and after my church services there would be other religious services for things like Mormonism, Hinduism, Catholicism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, New Age Mysticism, Atheism, Satanic Cults, Health and Wealth and Prosperity preachers...and just about everything else you could think of. It was a literal smorgasbord of rotten theology.

I would often find myself preaching the Bible to men who just minutes beforehand were either taking Mass in a Catholic church service, or being taught the Koran, or being told that faith in any god you want to will get you to Heaven.

There were times when before I was finished with my church service, the Jehovah's Witness volunteer was waiting outside the classroom door in order to begin his service as soon as I left.

It broke my heart.

I begged God to give the men a holy discernment; an ability to know the difference between right and wrong, truth and error, sound theology versus the doctrine of demons.

Some of the inmates who faithfully attended my weekly church services often asked me what they should do about all the stuff available to them. My counsel was typically the same, week after week:

"Study the Bible and only the Bible. Don't let anything else filter into your minds. If you come across some reading material in the cell blocks that you're curious about, tell me about it and I'll do everything I can to give you my honest opinion of it. But the only safe curriculum is the Bible."

Then, I would leave the jail to go home and couldn't return until the next week when I'd get to do it all over again.

I often reminded myself of this truth: IF THE DEVIL HAS HIS WICKED AND UNGODLY AMBASSADORS GOING INTO THE JAILS NON-STOP IN ORDER TO DECEIVE THE MEN SO THAT THEY WON'T TURN FROM THEIR SIN AND TRUST IN JESUS AS THEIR LORD AND SAVIOR THAT JUST GOES TO SHOW HOW PRECIOUS THOSE MEN'S SOULS ARE TO LORD AND I NEED TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO PREACH THE WORD OF GOD CLEARLY AND WITH BOLDNESS AND TO BEG THOSE MEN TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD ... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

And, my friends ... the same things goes for all of us today as well. We need to exercise a holy discernment regarding all that is taking place around us, both in society and in our personal Christian circles as well.

READ TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:6-9

1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

MAIN POINTS:

- I. Avoid Ungodly Sinners - (review verses 1-5)**
 - II. Beware of Ungodly Leaders - (verses 6-7)**
 - III. Rejection of the Ungodly - (verses 8-9)**
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I. Avoid Ungodly Sinners - (review verses 1-5)

1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

- A. "in the last days difficult times will come" - (vs.1)
- B. People will increase in ungodly living - (vs.2-4)
- C. They will masquerade a false religious exterior - (vs.5a)
- **(Matthew 7:15-20) "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits."**
- D. Avoidance — not association — is the command - (vs.5b)
1. "avoid" (*apotreo*) is in the middle voice; means to make yourself turn away.

II. Beware of Ungodly Leaders - (verses 6-7)

6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

A. Ungodly Leaders arise from the same group as in verses 1-5 - ("among them")

- (Acts 20:28-30) *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."*
- (2 Peter 2:1) *"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."*
- (2 Timothy 4:3-4) *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."*

B. Ungodly Leaders prey on the broken and unprotected - (vs. 6)

1. Not all false teachers do this but this characteristic of preying on the weak is found "among them."

C. Ungodly Leaders attract people with the same sinful impulses they have - (vs.6)

1. Likely mentions women who are weak because it's referring to false teaching men who are perverse and sexually immoral.
2. Just as Eve was the devil's first target in the Garden of Eden, Satan continues to target women even today. (*Do not be deceived!*)

D. Ungodly Leaders may grow in popularity, but not in truth - (vs.7b)

- **(2 Timothy 2:25) "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth"**

III. Rejection of the Ungodly - (verses 8-9)

8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

A. "Jannes and Jambres" - (not mentioned in the Old Testament)

1. (John MacArthur) *"Although Jannes and Jambres are not mentioned in Exodus or anywhere else in the Old Testament, they may have been among the magicians in the pharaoh's court who duplicated many of the miracles the Lord performed through Moses. Because Jannes perhaps means "he who seduces" and Jambres "he who makes rebellion," those may have been symbolic names given to these men at a later time. Jewish tradition holds that they pretended to convert to Judaism in order to subvert Moses' divine assignment to liberate Israel from Egypt, that they led in making and worshiping the golden calf while Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the Law from God, and that they were slaughtered by the Levites along with the other idolaters (see Exodus 32)."*

B. Ungodly teachers are in contrast to true Bible teachers - (vs.8)

1. "depraved mind" - perfect passive participle, indicating an established, continuous, and unalterable condition.
2. "rejected in regard to the faith" - (rejected) was used of metals that did not pass the test of purity and were discarded; also of counterfeits.

3. **(Revelation 2:14-16; PERGAMUM)** *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth."*

4. **(Revelation 2:20-24; THYATIRA)** *"But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you."*

C. Ungodly Leaders have no lasting part in true Christianity - (vs.9)

D. Ungodly Leaders are temporary hindrances - (vs.9)

- **(Matthew 16:18)** *"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."*

E. Ungodly Leaders will be unmasked in due time (vs.9)

- **(Jude 1-25) "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. 5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. 8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved**

forever. 14 *It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."* 16 *These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of *gaining an advantage.* 17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."* 19 *These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; 23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."**

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POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

1. Sinfulness is getting worse; both inside and outside of the church.
2. False teachers are men-pleasers who seek gain from their followers.
3. False teachers prey upon the weak, the unprotected, and the vulnerable.
4. They are many *Judas Iscariot's* in modern-day Christianity.
5. We must realize that the church is in spiritual warfare; a warfare that will intensify as Christ's second coming draws nearer.
6. We must be doctrinally discerning, evaluating every message against the truth of God's Word. (*"Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."* Acts 17:11)
7. We must live pure and holy lifestyles, being vessels of honor for the Lord's good use.
8. We must be patient as God does His work around us and through us and to us.
9. Regardless of whatever ungodly influences are around us, nothing can take away our salvation!
10. Although we must avoid ungodliness, we are still ambassadors of Christ with a Great Commission mandate to share the gospel with sinners.