

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

False Teaching

By Micky Galloway

During the days of Jeremiah, the wickedness of the people could not be blamed on any shortage of preachers for they had plenty. The problems existed because they had too many of the wrong kind of preachers, men who were preaching the wrong message. In Jeremiah chapters 5 and 6 we learn that both prophet and priest had failed, and the spiritual strength of the nation was dissipated. The people had relied on those who told them lies. God, through Jeremiah's writing, tells us plainly what the manner of false teaching was and its effect upon the hearers.

The false assurance of the prophets resulted in vain hope. In Jeremiah 23:16 we read, *“Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they teach you vanity....”* There is no substitute for truth. All the eloquence in the world, all the emotion, all the pleasant platitudes can never do what truth will do. Jesus taught, *“Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”* (Jn. 8:32). Nothing else can make us free. Some say, *“It really doesn't make any difference, as long as you are sincere.”* However, Paul was sincerely mistaken. In Acts 23:1 he said before the Jewish council, *“Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day.”* As he continued his defense before Agrippa he said, *“I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth...”* (Acts 26:9ff). Sincerity does not make that which is false any more truthful. The sincere person who drives on the wrong side of the highway will be killed just as dead as if he were a hypocrite. In matters of physical or spiritual life, only the truth can save. When the prophets of Jeremiah's day said to the people, *“Ye shall have peace... no evil shall come upon you”* (Jer. 23:16), their words instilled a vain hope. God has made many promises to us, and *“He is faithful that promised”* (Heb. 10:23), but we must make sure that we are trusting in what God has promised, and not in what man has told us that God promised. We must have the hope that is truly the *“anchor of the soul”* (Heb. 6:19). That hope is rooted in the word of God, not in what men say.

The prophets of Jeremiah's day preached their own ideas and opinions. Jeremiah said, *“They speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Jehovah”* (Jer. 23:16). Perhaps these felt that what they told was right, but that is subjective faith; one from within one's own heart and mind. Yet, ours must be an objective faith, from outside delivered from God. Paul said, *“faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). Too many are guided by their own feelings. Often what we feel is the result of what we have been taught to feel. If the teaching is wrong, the feelings will also be wrong. The only way to be sure that your feeling about spiritual matters is reliable is if it is based on what God said in His inspired word (Cf. Jas. 1:21).

The prophets of Jeremiah's day preached themselves not the Lord. Jeremiah said, *“I sent not these prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied”* (Jer. 23:21). These false prophets were not listening to God, yet they were telling the people, *“The Lord hath said...”* (verse 17). Paul later wrote of Satan *“blinding the minds of the unbelieving.”* What better way to do this than to convince the people they are following the Lord when in fact they are not? Instead of preaching myself, or my own ideas, I must preach as Paul did. When he wrote to the church in Corinth he said, *“And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God, For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”* (1 Cor. 2:1-5). Paul repeatedly warned about following men. *“Wherefore, let no man glory in men...”* (1 Cor. 3:21). *“This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech”* (Col. 2:4).

Whatever the motive, the false prophets turned people from God. Jeremiah said these false prophets *“cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal”* (Jer. 23:27). Indeed, God warned that there would be false teachers in every generation (2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; Acts 20:30). Does the intention of those who teach falsely really change the re-

sults of their false teaching? Whether or not it was the intention of the false prophet to lead people away from God, that was certainly the result.

The call of Jeremiah went forth to all Judah: “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16). The call went unheeded because the people followed the false prophets. – *Fifth Street East Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin Articles*, March 31, 2002 ■

The Lord Delivered Me!

Truly as the Psalmist wrote, the Lord is our deliver. Said he, “***The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold***” (Psa. 18:2, NJKV).

I feel like Paul who wrote, “***Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion***” (2 Tim 4:17). What Paul means regarding the “*lion*” could be a real “*lion*” (Christians were fed to lions) or perhaps a temporary delay from the final sentence of physical death.

But, in a manner of speaking, I have been delivered from “***the mouth of the lion.***” The *lion* I am referring to is the evil Covid-19 virus. If the Devil can’t get you one way, he will try another. As some of you know, my wife and I tested positive in August, and I required hospitalization. Below are some things that saved me from this *lion*.

First, God’s Grace saved me from this *lion*. This is the second time I have been saved by God’s grace. The first, when I obeyed the gospel and was “***saved by grace through faith***” from my sins. (Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 2:38; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7). The Lord’s grace and mercy saved me again, physically.

Second, I was saved by prayer. I am aware that many saints around the country and even in England were praying for my wife and I to recover. Prayer works! James wrote, “***And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much***” (Jas. 5:15-16). Thanks for all who prayed for my wife and me.

Third, I was saved by technology. The medical technology we have in this country is amazing. I am humbly grateful for the treatment I received. I was the beneficiary of medical technology, and many other electronic devices were at play during my hospitalization. Since I was in the Covid-19 treatment unit of the hospital, no visitors were allowed. Our only means of communication was by cell phone and texting—technology!

Fourth, I was saved by the around the clock care of the doctors and medical team. My treatment could not have been any better. The doctors and nurses are heroes!

Fifth, I was saved by the physical food I was given. Jesus in His model prayer instructed His disciples to pray for their daily bread (Matt. 6:11). I never missed a meal; the food was great! Several nurses said some Covid patients will not eat. I never lost my appetite while in the hospital.

Sixth, I was given instruction what I needed to do the help me recover from this *lion*. One device is a spirometer. This is a device to help your lungs recover and heal. I also had to “prone,” (lay on my stomach when I sleep) which aids recovery of the lungs. No one else can do this for me. I must do it! This is my burden to bear (Gal. 6:5).

Finally, I am now home recovering, and my lovely wife of 50 years, has picked up where the hospital staff left off. I am blessed and humbly grateful for her tender loving care (Eph. 5:12-25, 28, 31, 33). She is the ***better*** half; I am just the *other* half. May the Lord bless you all! – *tgmc* ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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