

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

Php 3:9 ...not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

Hungering and Thirsting for God's Word (Part 1)

- Evil men and *impostors* will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived

Sermon Text: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim 3

In the last days, difficult times will come. Sin and evil will increase rapidly. As Paul warns Timothy (and us) of this truth, he particularly emphasizes one of the most dangerous of these wicked manifestations. You see him repeat it here:

- Holding to a form of godliness but denying its power
- Deceivers enter into households take the weak captive

You see it then? *Deception. Lies. Counterfeits.* All designed to lead us away from Christ and be swept up into one of these deceptive delusions that end in hell.

The Lord Jesus warned us of the same danger:

Mat 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Mat 24:3-5 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying,

"Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (4) And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. (5) "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

And again:

Mat 24:11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

Mat 24:23-25 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. (24) "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. (25) "Behold, I have told you in advance.

All of these deceivers are antichrists, and one day THE Antichrist and his false prophet will arise:

Rev 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Rev 13:11-14 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. (12) He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. (13) He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. (14) And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who *had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

The warning is plain and the Lord has repeated it over and over again. This is what Satan does. As the

great liar and deceiver, he sends his emissaries to do his damning work, and he and they are able to present themselves as angels of light. If not for the Holy Spirit in us, we would all be led down Broadway to hell.

1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

2Pe 2:1-2 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) Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

1Jn 2:26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,

because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

The thing is not new. Right from the beginning we have the serpent in the garden lying and deceiving. Then as Old Testament history proceeded you have scores of false prophets opposing God's true prophets:

Jer 2:8 "The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' And those who handle the law did not know Me; The rulers also transgressed against Me, And the prophets prophesied by Baal And walked after things that did not profit.

Jer 23:1-2 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD. (2) Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds," declares the LORD.

Eze 22:25-28 "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her. (26) "Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. (27) "Her princes within her are like wolves tearing the prey, by shedding blood and destroying lives in order to get dishonest gain. (28) "Her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD has not spoken.

And so it is today even more so. We live in dangerous times.

Heb 10:23-27 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is

faithful; (24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (26) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

One of the chief reasons we gather together as a church on the Lord's day, is because *we see the Day drawing near*. The time of Christ's return. The Apostle here is exhorting and warning us that if we are to stand fast and not be deceived by the increasing lies and evil around us, *it is vital that we gather together as a church, as the people of God, to encourage one another*. And that encouragement is not the shallow, worldly kind that says something like – everything will turn out ok. Keep your chin up. NO. This

encouragement is the encouragement *to stand fast in the faith, in Christ's truth, and to not be led astray by false, lying deceivers. To hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering!*

For these reasons and more, because we are surrounded by evil deceivers, because the Day of Christ is approaching and wickedness is on the increase, because false prophets are standing in the pulpits of the churches, deceiving and being deceived, we must give ourselves with renewed discipline to gathering together as a church to hear God's Word taught and preached, and to give ourselves to faithful, daily study and hearing of God's Word. If we are careless in these things, be assured, we will be carried away by lies from the pit.

Here is an excerpt from this month's Standard Bearer magazine (published by Reformed Free Publishing). It is from an article written by Professor Brian Huizinga at the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary

and entitled *A Biblical Evaluation of the Modern "De-" Movement: Deconstruction, Dechurching, and Deconversion.*

"There is at present a massive social and religious movement sweeping through Christian churches, resulting in huge numbers of professing Christians leaving the Christian faith. The movement describes itself with one or a combination of the following terms:

- Deconstruction
- Dechurching
- Deconversion

Within this movement are professing Christians who dismantle their previously held religious beliefs, leave the Christian church, and sometimes completely renounce Christianity for atheism or agnosticism. The movement has been called 'the great crisis of our time' and 'the largest and fastest religious shift in the history of our country.'

Some argue that this current movement is essentially the return and rebranding of the Emergent Church Movement of the late 1990's and early 2000's. Many of our readers will remember ECM as an anti-institution, anti-tradition, anti-doctrine, and anti-authority postmodern religious phenomenon. It promoted a whatever makes you feel good relativism rather than orthodox doctrinal formulations, worship in coffee shops rather than traditional church sanctuaries, and trendy pastors who dialoged rather than dignified preachers who authoritatively proclaimed.

ECM faded but has returned with a vengeance in the modern De-movement. However, this new movement does not rely upon big names like Rob Bell and Brian McLaren. Instead, it harnesses the power and reach of social media (#deconstruction, #exevangelical) and empowers former church goers to share their 'stories' and create their own growing community.

The prefix 'de-' means "down, off, from." For example, while *ascend*

means 'to go up from a location,' *descend* means to go down from a location. To *deconstruct* is to take down what was constructed. In this modern movement, deconstruction refers to the process of questioning, reevaluating, and dismantling piece by piece the doctrinal beliefs with which one was raised.

Someone who deconstructs will talk something like this: 'I have decided to move away from my inherited beliefs. I was taught to reverence the Bible, fear God, maintain the faith, and keep the commandments. I was taught depressing doctrines like 'people are inherently bad;' the church called it 'total depravity.' I was taught to pray that other people would know the gospel of Jesus and become Christian, and that practicing homosexuals and Muslims will go to hell if they are not converted. I was reared in a strict and very traditional Christian home and attended a private Christian school where conservative views were reinforced. I never really thought for myself but just followed the rules. But now I am rethinking

everything. What really opened my eyes was going to college and hearting the *facts* about evolution and fossil records and I've been listening to this new podcast that has been incredibly enlightening; or I started dating this guy who has given me a totally new perspective on life...I am tearing down my restrictive Christian past and beginning my fulfilling and liberating journey to peace and happiness. Yes, this will strain my relationships with family and friends, but the liberation I am already feeling is incredibly gratifying.'

The Bible addresses movements like the modern DeMov. *Deconstruction is apostasy.* Apostasy is a deliberate turn away from the truth of the gospel of Christ by those who in some sense once held that truth and associated with Christ's church. The Greek word is translated in the New Testament as 'falling away' in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 –

2Th 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and

the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

And another passage of Scripture referring to the reality of apostasy is –

1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

Apostasy has many elements and they all fit with the modern DeMov. Apostasy is sovereignly sent by God in His judgment upon individuals and churches who do not love Him and His gospel.

2Th 2:10-11 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (11) For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

Under the sovereignty of God, apostasy is orchestrated by the Devil who is the father of the lie

and deceives the whole world with his devices. Apostasy is led by false prophets and heretics who are fueled by corrupt church members yearning for new things. Apostasy is spiritual whoredom.... Deconstruction, dechurcing, and deconversion are merely new terms for the old reality of apostasy.

One element of apostasy that this modern movement highlights is man's rebellious nature. The DeMov is rooted in disdain for authority. That is the fundamental issue. The one who deconstructs...despises his or her life under authority. The sinner always hates being under the authority of God, His Word, and His officebearers in the church. Every man is by nature self-willed and makes his own personal happiness the absolute standard for all his thinking and decisions.

We should not be surprised or terrified by apostasy. The modern DeMov is a clear eschatological sign that Christ is returning as He promised. The Bible teaches us to expect a great apostasy before the

return of our Lord. While apostasy makes us weep many tears of sorrow, it also causes us to rejoice in hope of our Lord's returning."

Finally, Professor Huizinga provides a list of answers to preserve us against this evil. These include:

- Reverent, joyful, weekly, worship in God's house, in Spirit and truth.
- Uncompromising devotion to the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God.
- Robust catechizing (discipling) of children
- Regular personal devotions and study (of Scripture)

I trust we all realize this then – *we live in tremendously dangerous and deceptive times. And the deceptions are going to get worse. We cannot afford to be "status quo" Christians. Our faithfulness to Christ's church, to His people, to His Word, cannot be "maintenance."*

Heb 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; (24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; **and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

All the MORE! See it? My exercise of following Christ which I practiced last year or 5 years ago, is not sufficient for today. *All the more.* The Day draws near and that means the enemy's energy and deceptions are more than they were. *The weapons the Lord has given us for the battle are just as sufficient today as they were centuries ago, BUT has our use of these weapons and the wisdom needed to wield them grown?* Maintenance level Christianity is not sufficient. It never has been. "Maintaining" only produces infants.

How to Approach God's Word

There are several disciplines which the Lord has given us to fight the fight and to grow in Christ. They are often called *the means of grace*. Prayer, reading God's Word, fellowship with His church...the means by which the Lord graciously causes us to grow.

In this series of messages, I want us to focus upon the discipline of hearing, reading, and studying the Bible. It is this which Paul reminded Timothy of-

2Ti 3:14-17 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, (15) and that from childhood **you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.** (16) **All Scripture** is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (17) **so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

A central and important theme of this series, which I hope the Lord drives deeply into your mind and heart, is that a mere superficial dealing with, handling, reading of the Bible is not sufficient. Reading “a chapter a day” or following a “through the Bible in one year” program, while good things to do, is still not sufficient. It is not what Paul meant here in his words to Timothy. Why? Because of this:

Mat 13:19-21 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. (20) "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; (21) yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

We can read our Bible, even quite regularly, we can even memorize

it, *but if we do not understand it, it will come to nought.*

I want to emphasize in this series something which very probably most professing Christians have never realized or admitted. It is this –

We need help in understanding God's Word.

Now, this does not mean that we are teaching what Rome claims – that the individual Christian requires the priests and the Papacy to tell them what the Bible says. But what we are saying is that we need the help which the Lord provides us with if we are going to “get it.” American Christians are far too independent and insist they will do fine “going it alone.” But this is simply not true.

Christ has established His church, His body, of which we are members. Furthermore, He has done this:

Eph 4:11-16 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and

some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (12) **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man,** to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (14) As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (15) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, (16) **from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**

You need *help* if you are going to grow up in Christ. If you insist on going it alone, if the church is not really a necessity for you, if you don't think that you really need a

pastor-teacher to help you understand God's Word, then you are a sitting duck for Satan's attack.

Let me end for today by challenging us all. God has given us pastor-teachers. Why? Because we need someone to watch over us and to teach us God's Word so that we understand it. What does this mean?

It means that we must use what God has given us. His church. His pastor-teachers. In the church hearing God's Word taught carefully – *“Let's read these verses together and then learn what God is saying.”* So we pick up our Bible, we open it, and we sit under the teaching of a pastor-teacher who God has provided us with. I open my Bible, and read, and then listen to Lloyd Jones, or Robert Haldane, or J.C. Ryle. So I understand and then I am able to teach you. The Christians I know who I can see real growth in, are those who have given themselves to this kind of study of God's Word. They are not “me and my Bible” people.

Next Lord's Day I want us to look further at this 3rd chapter of 2nd Timothy – *so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work*. How? By knowing the sacred writings which give us God's wisdom and deliver us from Satan's lies.