

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 12) (October 11, 2026)

His Word is Truth

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 13

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor 13

2Ti 3:16-17 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.

This morning I want us to continue in our consideration of the vital importance of reading, hearing, and understanding God's Word. We have seen that His Word is fire and hammer, shield and sword. Each piece of the Christian's armor directly derives from God's Word. It is God's truth which sets us free from Satan's deceptions and therefore carelessness and slothfulness in putting on this armor is the height of foolishness and danger.

You will recall from our morning class last Sunday that we read this from Martyn Lloyd-Jones' studies in the sermon on the mount, commenting on Matthew 7:5 –

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

"You notice, our Lord's picture suggests that there is a difficulty, and that there is something subtle about this. You notice the very terms in which He puts it, this picture of the sheep's clothing. **He suggests that the real difficulty about this kind of false prophet is that at first you never imagine that he is such. The whole thing is extremely subtle**, so much so that God's people can be misled by it. You notice how Peter puts it in the second chapter of his second Epistle. These people, he says, 'creep in unawares'. They look like the right people; they have sheep's clothing on, and no one suspects anything false.

Now the Bible, in the Old Testament and in the New, always brings out that characteristic of the false prophet. **It is his subtlety that really constitutes the danger.**

The false prophet is a man who comes to us, and who at first has the appearance of being everything that could be desired. He is nice and pleasing and pleasant; he appears to be thoroughly Christian, and seems to say the right things. His teaching in general is quite all right and he uses many terms that should be used and employed by a true Christian teacher. He talks about God, he talks about Jesus Christ, he talks about the cross, he emphasizes the love of God, he seems to be saying everything that a Christian should say. He is obviously in sheep's clothing, and his way of living seems to correspond.

So, you do not suspect that there is anything wrong at all; there is nothing that at once attracts your attention or arouses your suspicion, nothing glaringly wrong. What then can be wrong, or may be wrong, with such a person? My suggestion is that finally this person may be wrong both in his teaching and in his type of life for, as we shall see, these two things are always indissolubly linked together. Our Lord puts it by

saying, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.' The teaching and the life can never be separated, and where there is wrong teaching in any shape or form it always leads to a wrong type of life in some respect.

How then can we describe these people? What is wrong with their teaching? **The most convenient way of answering this is to say that there is no 'strait gate' in it, there is no 'narrow way' in it.** As far as it goes it is all right, but it does not include this. **It is a teaching, the falseness of which is to be detected by what it does not say rather than by what it does say.** And it is just at this point that we realize the subtlety of the situation.

As we have already seen, any Christian can detect the man who says outrageously wrong things; but is it unfair or uncharitable to say that **the vast majority of Christians today do not seem to be able to detect the man who seems to say the right things but leaves out vital things?** We have somehow got hold of the idea that

error is only that which is outrageously wrong; and we do not seem to understand that **the most dangerous person of all is the one who does not emphasize the right things.** That is the only way to understand rightly this picture of the false prophets.

The false prophet is a man who has no 'strait gate' or 'narrow way' in his gospel. **He has nothing which is offensive to the natural man; he pleases all.** He is in 'sheep's clothing', so attractive, so pleasant, so nice to look at. He has such a nice and comfortable and comforting message. He pleases everybody and everybody speaks well of him. He is never persecuted for his preaching, he is never criticized severely. He is praised by the Liberals and Modernists, he is praised by the Evangelicals, he is praised by everybody. He is all things to all men in that sense; **there is no 'strait gate' about him, there is no 'narrow way' in his message, there is none of 'the offence of the cross'.**

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. Studies in the Sermon on the Mount (pp. 559-560). Eerdmans. Kindle Edition.

We here in this church are greatly privileged. How is that? We are privileged because the Lord has wonderfully protected us from wolves in sheep's clothing. He has winnowed out the tares by the truth of His Word and by doing so He has helped us see clearly, not being carried away by every wind of doctrine. Think about this carefully —

If we had even 200 people here with all kinds of programs and “happenings” going on, we would be very tempted, and probably deceived, that all of it was of the Lord. If all of that crowd thought the sermons and teaching were just soooo wonderful, we would be swept away by the momentum of it all. And yet all the while, there would be no narrow way, no strait gate, no cost to following Christ, no offense of the Cross. But the Lord has stripped away all of that from us. We must put on the spectacles of God’s Word so that

we see clearly right through Satan’s lies.

Let’s return to our text for this morning and look at it more closely-

1Co 13:1-3 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. (2) If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. (3) And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Satan is crafty and subtle. We have no strength of our own and, to repeat it once more, we must be very, very thankful to the Lord that He has put us in this small, weak church so that we are driven to *be strong in the Lord and in the strength of HIS might*. As John Calvin put it:

“We need God to actually work in us from day to day. Otherwise, we will be so inconstant that the least thing will cause us to go astray.”
[Sermons on Galatians]

Now, look at these 3 verses closely. Let's imagine a church where all of these things are to be found:

- The people able to speak with all the languages of the world
- Resident prophets and teachers whose knowledge of theology is unsurpassed
- Great steps of faith being taken – the leaders putting goals and visions before the people that are over the edge
- A financial ministry that supports missions and helps to the poor
- And even, if it were possible, martyrs who were members of such a church

Who would not want to be part of such a church? The cutting edge of Christianity. You could feel the energy – surely it is the Holy Spirit.

And yet...

Something is missing. If you could look behind the closed doors, if you could visit, unnoticed, in the homes of the members, what is it that would trouble you? What is it that is missing? Paul tells us:

The whole thing, this huge, exciting, energized organism, is not only NOTHING to the Lord, it is obnoxious to Him. It is a noisy gong and clanging, irritating cymbal in His ears. Why? Because what is missing is the love of Christ. Love of the brethren for one another. Love for the Lord.

This church was that very thing once. The building was full, the music, the choir, skilled musicians, children's ministries, a preacher whose sermons were “wonderful”. But what was the truth behind the veil? There was no:

- Patience
- Kindness
- Humility

Instead there was jealousy, bragging, arrogance, worldly behavior, self-seeking, people

easily provoked to anger, a quest for revenge when wronged.

And so, it was nothing. Wood, hay and stubble. And each of us need to be very, very thankful that the Lord has delivered us from that. YOU are very privileged! Never, never, never crave to be in a church that seems to have it all – because such places are exactly the kind where Satan’s deceptions are strongest. Why?

Because there is no narrow way, no strait gate, no offense of the cross there. The thing is pleasing to the natural man, and it is the natural man that such places attract.

Listen some more to John Calvin:

“ We need to be aware of the fact that the devil has used the name of God throughout the ages as a cloak to cover his lies and disguise them as truth. By doing this, he has created discord, so that little by little, the impact of the gospel is weakened...Paul exhorts us to be wise. For if the devil misuses the

name of God, we are to resist him. We must remember the true condition of man in this world; we must not believe everything we are told nor allow ourselves to be driven with the wind and tossed.

A seducer devises ways to make his target drink his fatal poison by degrees. The devil works in the same way! For if he revealed his horns (as they say) at the first, and declared himself to be the enemy of God, we would flee his presence and find him detestable. Indeed we are astonished when we find that he has overcome us in once area or another, for all the while we were convinced that we were holding fast to the Lord Jesus Christ, as members of his church. Such is Stan’s work that we are at first unaware of it, until we finally come to realize that he has totally deceived us.” [Sermons on Galatians, Banner of Truth]

The point of deception which I particularly want us to expose this morning is, to repeat – *envying the big, the happening, the wealthy, the cathedral “church” because we*

look at our smallness and weakness here, and listen to people mock and judge us. “Oh, if we just had a big youth ministry like that church,” or “if we only had that big choir,” or “if we could support a great missionary enterprise,” ...

I want to warn you – this is the very thing Paul is exposing here. A so-called church can have all of those things and more and yet, if they do not have love for Christ and His love for them, they are nothing. Jealousy, arrogance, this is what you will find in such man-created machines.

Look at our text again:

1Co 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
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Love rejoices with the truth. What does an entity, a false church, rejoice in? UN-righteousness. Lies. Facades. Deceptions. In fact, such places hate God's truth, God's Word and that is why their pastors exclude the narrow way, the

offense of the cross, from their preaching.

Rome as Satan's Masterpiece

There seems to be an increase in the numbers of foolish people joining ranks with the Pope. Turning Point USA, Fox News, and other such organizations have many Roman Catholics within them. Billy and Franklin Graham have also played roles in this deception. But consider the allure of Rome:

- Dates back to perhaps the 400's although Rome as you know insists that Peter was the first pope.
- It's size – worldwide, millions and millions of members
- Its priesthood
- Its sacraments
- Its traditions which are supposedly equal to Scripture
- Its saints and martyrs
- Its great cathedrals

All of these things appeal to the natural man's flesh. Rome, in other words, claims to be that “church”

with all of those things Paul mentioned – Languages, prophecy and prophets, secret knowledge of mysteries, feeding the poor, the martyrs..... And yet, it is worse than nothing to the Lord. Why?

Because Rome's gospel is false, because Rome saves no one, because Christ is not present in Rome and the people in it are not born again. Therefore, the fruit of the Spirit is absent, including the greatest fruit which is love. What is present?

- Jealousy
- Arrogance
- Unrighteousness
- Rejection of truth

Here is John Calvin again – remember, he and his fellow reformers suffered greatly from Rome's persecutions –

“It is our duty to differentiate between the Apostle Paul and all those who falsely boast and brag that they are sent by God. The Pope (in order to deceive this poor world of ours, and maintain his unlawful

and hellish oppression) claims to be the ‘Vicar of Jesus Christ’, in direct succession to the apostles! And then there are those vermin of clergymen under him, known as bishops. If we take them at their word, they have all descended directly from the apostles! Yet we must examine what affinity there is between them.

If God has authorized their calling, then they ought to bear clear and infallible testimony to this fact. However, the Pope and all his followers are found guilty of falsifying and corrupting the whole teaching of the gospel. What they call the service of God is no more than an abomination in his sight. Their entire system is built on lies and gross deception, for they have been bewitched by Satan himself, as most of us are already aware.

But what cloak does Satan use to cover all this evil? It is the notion that there has been a continuous succession since the days of the apostles; thus these bishops represent the apostles today in the church, and whatever they say must be accepted. Well then, our

task is to decide whether those who claim these things have anything in common with the apostles. We are to exercise discernment and not blindly accept a man's claim to have been sent by God without due thought or consideration; for Satan's agents may constantly boast of their calling, while disguising their true characters, and thus deceitfully infiltrate the church. It is our duty to test all such people to see whether or not God has called them." [Ibid]

I repeat – never, never, never envy or covet a “cathedral.” A “big” church. Never crave for magnificence or you will inevitably be deceived and led off the narrow way of Christ.

The things that are first in this world are going to be last in the Kingdom of God. The Lord came to Elijah not in the thunder and show of power, but in that still, quiet breeze.

1Co 1:26-28 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the

flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; (27) but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, (28) and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

Do you see it? Do you understand and believe this? Where the Lord is present, where He truly is working, there is no room left for man to boast. If man is boasting, if professing Christians are looking to the works of their own hands, be sure that the Lord is not present in it. Noisy gong, clanging cymbals. Nothing. Its all nothing.

A Man Must be Called

People are very foolish, as we would be if it were not for the Lord giving us His Spirit of wisdom. Even then we must carefully rely upon Him and not ourselves. One of the most dangerous and widespread deceptions Satan uses

is to draw us into a “church” where the pastors and teachers are not called by the Lord. Consider –

How do most professing Christians select a church? Well, they look for the outward show, the impressive structures, the ‘feeling’ of the cathedral. Do they look for the narrow way, for the offense of the cross? No. In fact they are repelled by such things. Christ’s truth is not what they want.

But what should they be asking and considering? *“Is the pastor-teacher(s) called by God? Have they been sent by Him to preach and teach His Word faithfully? Yet how many even consider these things. And thus they end up in Rome or in some Protestant cathedral with a famous man in the pulpit. They end up, in other words, on Broadway headed for hell.*

Listen once more to John Calvin-

“Men must not arrogantly exalt themselves; they should be raised up and sent by God. Those whom

God calls are simply instruments of His Holy Spirit.” [Ibid]

All true Christians are called by God, effectually, to salvation. But not all are called to shepherd His flock. Consider:

Eph 4:11-12 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;

Rom 10:14-15 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? (15) How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

God has always worked in this way. He calls. He sends. Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah – all the prophets and all the apostles were called,

appointed and sent. While there are not prophets or apostles today, the Lord still sends preachers to preach. He calls them and appoints them to faithfully preach and teach the Word He has given through His prophets and apostles. Not to add to it nor take away from it.

This is the fundamental thing then if we are to avoid Satan's lies and deceptions. We must not be carried away by appearances and crave to join some outwardly impressive edifice or measure things by the mere reputation or fame of those who preach there.

Rev 2:8-11 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: (9) 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. (10) 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful

until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (11) 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

We must never forget the most important blessing of all, that pearl of great price and treasure that we must have – knowing that in Christ, God loves us, that we are His children, members of His true Church. Without this peace, this peace with God and peace of conscience we will be miserable even if we enjoy the fame and wealth of this world. Thank the Lord everyday that He has saved you by His Son, caused you to be born again, and protected you from Satan's schemes.