

Staying Alert

The Apostle Paul gave a number of warnings in his writings. To the church at Corinth he wrote, "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong." (1 Corinthians 16:13). Watch means to be alert, pay attention to what is happening. To the churches of Galatia he wrote, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-8). It is easy to be fooled or snickered by "another Gospel" if one becomes complacent and lazy.

This was illustrated to me by my computer the other day. I have a Bible program which I use on a regular basis to look up words, passages, and compare translations. Originally, the default Bible translation was the German translation of the Lutheran Bible. Sometimes it frustrates me because I will not change the translation to the New King James Bible until I click and I cannot read looking at this translation. At which time I click on my trusty NKJV and go onward. Never once have I mistakenly used the German translation in notes or power point.

However, for some unexplained reason the Bible program changed from the default Lutheran Bible to an English Bible, the Modern New King James Bible. On more than one occasion I did not catch this and used the MNKJV, it is even hard to type out. I thought of Paul's warnings and realize the closer something is to the truth the harder it is to spot the differences.

The people in Galatia heard the Gospel, believed Jesus to be the Son of God, repented of their sins, confessed Christ, and were baptized for the remission of their sins. How do I know this? That was preached on the Day of Pentecost and afterward in the Book of Acts. The difference Paul was addressing in this "other gospel" might have seem minor and insignificant. This "other gospel" was not changing the plan of salvation, or the work of the church, but the issues of circumcision, eating of meats, and Sabbath Day observance were added as parts of the Gospel of Christ. Is this worth mentioning? One change in one part of the Gospel makes a different Gospel.

Once a "small" change is accepted another change is on the way. If one can deviate from one part of the plan of salvation, they can deviate from the whole plan. If one can change

how we worship God in one part then they can change everything else which pertains to worship, and so it goes for the organization and work of the church.

No only does one change make for “another gospel” it also starts the digression from the whole Gospel. What one generation will justify as an acceptable change; the next generation will take to another level. After a few generations the doctrine of the church no longer resembles the doctrine of the Apostles in the first century.

We would do well to take seriously the warnings of Paul to make sure we are neither adding to, subtracting from, or substituting for the Gospel of Christ.

The Hebrew writer wrote, “1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him” (Hebrews 2:1-3) Let us not be fooled or tricked by what might seem like small departures from God’s word. Drifting is not running but you still move away from where you need to be to some where else. Let us take seriously these warnings.- - Dennis Tucker