

7. In The Last Days

We hear many people predict that we are living in the last days. Either they can be simply doomsday-sayers or Christians who are seeing current situation correctly according to the Bible, the Word of God.

According to the prophecies (eschatology) from Daniel, Ezekiel and Isaiah, in the latter days people will go to and fro throughout the whole earth and knowledge will increase. The very computer I used to write this sermon is better and more powerful than the computer they used to send the men to the moon in 1960's. Matthew 24

Truly, we are living in the last days. The Lord Jesus told us to, *"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* (Luke 21:36)

Why should we "Watch and Pray"? Watch what? Pray for what? We need to keep our eyes on Jesus who is our Redeemer and Savior and pray that we may not stray away from His Word and His ways. How can we stray away from God when we come to the church services & Bible studies? Very easy. Our Christian lives do not limit at the end of this church service. As a matter of fact, it starts all over again. Let's not think that we need to come here to the Bible studies to keep brown points from God. We should come to the service to hear from the Word of God and to be recharged, so that we may go back to the work place or home to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Think this place as a pit stop in spiritual Indy 500.

A. THE MOCKERS AT WORK

Jude 17-19 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be (1) mockers in the last time who would (2) walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are (3) sensual persons, who (4) cause divisions, (5) not having the Spirit.

The time this letter was written by Jude was somewhere around 60-65 A.D. I get the impression that Jude was hearing from Peter and Paul about these apostates who were making Christian believers to astray away from God. There are two books in the Bible that are very much related with this portion of Jude. They are 1 Timothy 4:1-5 and 2 Peter 2.

1Tim. 4:1-5 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron (This is the reason why we cannot trust our own conscience), forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (One of the reasons for our prayer before our meals).

Since Apostles told and warned us about these apostates, we should not be surprised by their subtle and sleek approaches.

Let's see how they operate. If we know how they operate, the battle is half over:
1) Mockers - With cynical jabs, these people ridicule the doctrines of Christian faith and scoff at the authority of Scripture and they challenge against the Throne of God.

2) **Walk according to their own ungodly lusts** - corrupt theology almost always decays into corrupt morals. Once apostates cut loose the anchor of Scripture, they freely follow the winds of their own lusts without remorse. Did you notice that many cults promise physical and sexual freedom to do whatever our carnal desires want as baits? Mormon's doctrine is the prime example of this.

3) **Sensual persons** - Like the Pharisees, they boast in their separateness by exception and superior spirituality. They claim that they are not "Bound to the restrictions and inhibitions of ordinary Christians." In actuality, Jude says, their mind-set is entirely worldly. They are ruled by their worldly desires which in the end destroy them.

4) **Cause divisions** - With an elite mentality even though they are not, they put themselves above the leaders of the church and sow seeds of discord and doubt - critical and untruthful words about the pastor, a skeptical remark about Christ. They never sign their own names in the letter when they send it to somebody. They want to be remain behind of shadow like demons. They put words in someone else's ears, so that those people who have shallow knowledge in the Word may speak and complain for them. This eventually ends up in church division.

5) **Not having the Spirit** - There is a telling reason for their worldly mindedness. They are fake Christians.

2 Peter chapter 2 sums it up so powerfully about these people:

2Pet. 2:18-22 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," (Prov 26:11) and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (from the Syrian story of Ahikar, known to Peter and his readers)

We cannot just blame on those false teachers about the problems we are facing in these last days. In business world, we call it "Supply and Demand". These false teachers could not maintain their positions unless there are demands for their teachings. Instead of listening to the sound doctrines of God's Word, people rather want to hear whatever please them.

2Tim. 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

B. NO FRONTAL ATTACK BY SATAN

Even though it is rare for me to watch football games, whenever I watch it, I shake my head in amazement for the sizes of those players. To compare with them in size, I would be looked like a bug on a tree trunk, if I stood next any one of those defense

end. Let's say a quarterback got a ball, he steps back a few. As he expected, his running back runs toward him and grabs a ball from his hands run toward some openings between these human defense wall. Most likely, unless you are Emmitt Smith, they would take you down in no time. I sure don't want to be the guy on the bottom of the pile with the few defense ends on the top of me. If so, they have to scoop me up with a pudgy knife. So in other word, the frontal attack doesn't work that well. Satan knows about that too. He tried to demolish the first century church with the brutal Roman power. What happened? The Christianity spreaded out faster than satan could keep up with. So he came up with an ingenious idea. He attacked the inside of the church. He went around, like a quarterback cocks his arm back and throws a long hard tight screwed ball to a wide receiver who went in deep. Persecution never hurts the church, as a matter of fact, it cleanses the church. But the attack that mixes false doctrines with a little bit of truth is hard to detect.

Deterioration is never sudden. No garden "suddenly" overgrows with thrones and weeds. No church "suddenly" break down. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, certain things are accepted that once were rejected. At the outset they may appear harmless, but the wedge they bring leaves a gap that grows wider as moral erosion joins hands with spiritual decay.

Essentially, these men are not spiritual. They are carnal and insensitive to the Holy Spirit. Their truth is not based on the Word of God.

Sensual has nothing to do with sexual attractiveness. It denotes the person who lives only by and for the physical senses, coupled with a note of selfishness. Their motto: "if it feels good, do it" (or, "how can it be wrong if it feels so right?").

How the church needs true spiritual men and women today!

Not having the Spirit - That is how that epitaph could be written over so many churches, or church projects, or evangelism campaigns, or home groups, or individual Christian lives.

Could it describe our lives? It is the attitude that looks to ourselves for the solutions first.

What difference has the Holy Spirit made in our lives this last week? Have we yielded ourselves to the Holy Spirit in the last week? Satan would love for us to just forget about living life in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

C. APPLICATIONS

How do we get the Holy Spirit's wisdom and anointing for His Word? Ask in faith:

Luke 11:13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

But ask often.