

"Be Not Deceived"

Scripture Lesson:- Ephesians 5: 1-10.

Text:- Ephesians 5: 6.

Introduction:- We have all lived long enough to know what it is to be deceived. We have been deceived by our friends, by our enemies, our neighbors and our relatives.

False teachers have crossed our paths, and under pretence of doing good, have poisoned our minds with error. They have held out hopes to us that have proved false. Some of them have told us that there is no God; others that there is no life beyond the grave; some have said that all men will be saved, that there is plenty of time to repent.

Sin has deceived us. Every sinner is under a delusion. Sin meets him with smiles and holds out to him the pleasures and delights that are not pure and lasting. (Illustration of tramp who came to the meeting)

I.

How many men all over the world are being deceived by the god of this world. Satan is the greatest enemy of our souls. He blinds our reason and deceives our consciences by his falsehoods. He often comes as an angel of light. He says to the young man, "Sow your wild oats." "It will be time enough to be religious when you grow old." Then many young men yield to a life of extravagance and excess, under the false hope that he will get satisfaction. But he does not. He often times is dragged down to the depth of want and woe. The prodigal. Beware of satan for he is the father of a lie.

II.

Our own heart deceives us. The scripture says, "The heart is deceitful above things and desperately wicked; who can know it." How many times we have said that we never would do a certain thing again, and then we have done it again within 24 hours. A man

may think he has fathomed the depths of his heart, but he will find that it has deeper depths he has not reached. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool", say the scriptures. Luther once said he feared his own heart more than the Pope and all the cardinals.

Many a weeping wife has said of her husband, "He is allright at heart". If his heart was good, all else would be right. Out of the heart are the issues of life. Jesus said, "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts wickedness, deceit, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness". That is Christ's own statement regarding the unregenerate heart. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light". Jewish Rabbi's question. We need to make it a prayer of David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!"

III.

How watchful men should be of their thoughts, their practices, their feelings. Men should stop now and then to examine themselves. They should lay their hearts bare before God, their minds should judge themselves by his holy will. We ought to watch on every side. Many a man has fallen at the very point where he thought he was safest. Peter was the most zealous and defiant of the disciples, bold and outspoken; yet he degenerated for a time into a lying, swearing, sneaking coward, afraid of a little maid, who was keeping the door.

Let danger and need drive you closer to God. He never slumbers or sleeps, and in his keeping power you will be safe. Lay hold of him in prayer. "Watch and pray".

IV.

Christianity is not responsible for the deception that exists among its professing disciples. You might hold a ship company responsible for every one who jumps overboard. If the passenger has

remained on the ship he would have been safe. The reason the church now and then is scandalized by the exposure of some leading church member or or high official in the church, is not his Christianity, but his lack of it. Some secret sin has been eating at the heart of the tree, and in a critical moment it is blown down and his rottenness revealed.

Conclusion:- Lincoln had a saying that you may be able to deceive all the people some of the time, some of the people all the time, but you will not be able to deceive all the people all of the time. Death will uncover the deception, if it is not detected sooner; and the unfortunate victim will stand, undeceived, in the presence of a God who cannot be mocked.