

There Must Be Heresies

(Transcript)

By Warren Zehrung – 6/21/2014

When I was a young man I was very impressed with a small group of Catholic nuns in our parish. The Sisters of Charity were so good! They were **relentless** workers – generous and kind – pure and sweet. When they went about their duties – they had a bounce in their steps and a smile on their faces.

They made a lasting impression on me – so much so that when I came into God's Church I felt that they had a right to the Kingdom – same as us. They owned nothing – as they had taken a vow of poverty. But they served the poor and those in the hospital – they aided the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world.

Their actions were closer to pure religion than the practice of many Church members - and yet they were not converted Christians - what was missing?

James 1:

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

I have seen some of our brethren go to far away missions to help teach the people in those communities – but I do not believe that I've ever witnessed anyone with the charitable giving, and willing sacrifice of those Sisters of Charity. We understand that God has not called them at this time – though He has not forgotten them. Can you imagine how they will embrace God's Truth when they are at last granted a measure of God's Holy Spirit?

That is one religious scenario – let me give you another:

In 1983 we were privileged to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. For the first time I saw Jewish Rabbis in their priestly robes and liturgical garments. They were almost indistinguishable from the vestments a Catholic priest wore at Sunday mass. Was God **impressed** with that kind of display – we know that He was not.

Then there is the Faith and religion of the true Church of God's called out brethren. For a while in the last century – 1940's, 50's, and 60's it seemed that the Church of God was to some extent a well-functioning group, fitly framed together. Why would God say that there must be **heresies**? Because God knew that Satan would contaminate the church-going believers with non-believing tares.

Matthew 13:

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

Wouldn't it be a wonderful congregation if everyone was living their Christianity – serving and helping one another – living by every word of God. But that is a situation reserved for the millennial Kingdom of God. The reality is that God is allowing us to live face to face and shoulder to shoulder with those who do not share our faith.

Matthew 13:

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

So it is not God's intention for the church to be entirely clean for now. What we do **not** want to do is paint everyone with the same brush – declaring that there is not a good one in the bunch. We are not going to go deeply into this Matthew 13 parable of the tares right now except to show that God says there are **parallel realities** going on in His Church at any given time.

In today's sermon we will be **comparing** and **contrasting** pure religion with the common heretical practices of many of today's church groups. There are those who are striving for the Kingdom – right alongside those who are going along for the ride – they are of the world.

The apostle Paul informs us that "the **mystery of iniquity** does already work." (2 Thessalonians 2:7). That was written ~ 50 AD. And brethren, make no mistake about it, the **mystery of iniquity** is still causing destruction, devastation and wreaking havoc in the churches of God. That is why we have to be ever watchful.

There are those who are with the program – and there are those who do not have a clue as to what the **work of God** is. It is fully living according to the guidelines, and believing the message and precepts that Jesus Christ represents.

John 6:

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the **work of God**, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Within our congregations of the Church of God – Unbelievers exist right alongside true believers. This shows us that we need to be careful not to lump everyone together. Sometimes the tares go to Sabbath services for years and even decades – but eventually they will be sorted out.

For a while in the Worldwide Church of God, doctrine was relatively consistent and accepted throughout the Church. Many were being called; the members were being spiritually fed; and the gospel was being effectively preached throughout the world. And yet, God was not mocked – He began the process of **separating out** the believers from the non-believers.

During the disorientation of the apostasy true brethren were maliciously cast aside. For some, the scars of that abuse remain. We live in an era in which the brethren must be allowed to heal. Brethren are reluctant to trust again after being hurt repeatedly by a harsh ministry. There are brethren who continue seeking for others with whom to fellowship who are living according to God's truth. It is God's Will that all the brethren, including those that were driven away, be fed and nourished – that's a good work.

We saw a tremendous **sorting-out** take place when the apostasy came on the Church. Some brethren were hurt badly when their minister of their particular church or organization betrayed them let them down. Many people were revealed as **not** being a part of us.

1 John 2:

19 They **went out** from us, but they were **not** of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were **not all of us**.

It was clearly made manifest that those who remained in Worldwide did not believe God – and did not obey His commandments. But brethren, let's understand that the sorting out is not complete. The sorting out of Matthew 13 will not be complete until after Jesus Christ returns. Therefore we must be ever watchful. The title of today's sermon comes from this verse:

1 Corinthians 11:

19 *For **there must be also heresies** among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*

So it is clear that God is always doing the sorting-out of His people. Those who **are approved** of God will be made manifest among us. If we are wise we would not be too quick to assume that we are among those who are approved. The proof of verse 19 is evidenced by how many have been deceived by heresies in the past—even the recent past. Even now, those without faith are being made manifest.

Luke 12:

46 *The lord of that servant will come in a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the **unbelievers**.*

Unbelievers comes from the Greek word 'apistos' which means, "without faith." Living by faith is to take God at His word and act upon it – without requiring supporting physical evidence.

So as we study these verses please realize that there are two parallel religious groups of people – two churches – separate but interwoven throughout each other. Two almost **indistinguishable** groups are in contention in these verses. We need to be discerning and discriminating.

Not everything of a religious nature that comes on TV is profitable for us. One holds the True Doctrine of Christ and practice of Christianity. And the other is a false faith that substitutes today's mainstream religion for God's Truth.

2 John:

2 For the **truth's** sake, which dwells in us, and shall be with us forever.

"For the truth's sake." John is writing for the very purpose **of keeping God's Truth alive...** seeking the truth *once delivered unto the saints* by Christ and the apostles. John explains that the truth of God dwells in us = the Truth remains in a few scattered brethren ...then and now – today. Because the true church will never die out – it exists in a small dedicated flock.

2 John:

- 3** Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth **and** Godly love.

Notice John's **two main** aspects – Truth and Godly Love, which he has written much on in First John. This was being written nearly 100 AD – and notice there are True Christians – but they are mostly in the **minority** – only a small flock.

2 John:

- 4** I rejoiced greatly that I found of [among] thy children walking in **truth**, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

John is saying "Thankfully," not all the Church has let down – there were some still walking in **truth**. The direct implication is that some have let down and gone back into the world. There were brethren then – just as there are today – who were holding fast to the truth.

And there were also the very **visible tares** – who gave the Church of God a bad name. But, when John says, "I found **of thy** children..." it means that **only some** were holding fast to the truth.

The very reason that the beloved apostle John had to write this epistle is because there were so many **pretenders** to the true faith who had accepted and were following **substitute** Christianity – just as it is today in the many scattered Churches of God.

John is answering the question, "Just whom do we have our Christian fellowship with? Who do we spiritually associate with? Are we and they led by God's Holy Spirit? Yes, we fellowship with those who are led by God's Holy Spirit. No, we do not fellowship with those who support evil political regimes.

But we do stay in **contact** with **all the brethren** possible – because it falls to us to warn them and show them that God's way is not by the might and power of large political corporations – but by God's Holy Spirit.

Zechariah 4:

- 6** Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Perhaps a few will be spared the horrors of the soon coming tribulation. If they will learn to **lay their lives down** now for each other – perhaps they will not have to die in the tribulation.

2 Timothy 2:

- 25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

- 26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

A faithful servant does what he is supposed to do – even when no one else is being faithful to his Master. The true Church of God – the true brethren – are a beautiful thing. They are the wheat among the tares. The part of the Church - in the past that was not so pretty and not so good was the part that was not the Church—they were the *not approved* unbelievers.

Isaiah 52:

- 7** How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigns!

We are Zion – we are the True Church of God. “Good tidings” is another way of saying that the gospel of the Kingdom is being preached – and it is the gospel of salvation. The apostle Paul was moved by the words of Isaiah:

Romans 10:

- 13** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- 14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?
- 15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Even Isaiah realized that it would be a mixed bag of believers and non-believers – wheat and tares. The true brethren among the false people.

Romans 10:

- 16** But they have **not all** obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who hath believed our report?
- 17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Our singleness of mind as Christians enables us to seek out the truth of God and by the Holy Spirit, live by it. By communicating, praying for other Christians, fellowshiping, and showing ourselves true to God’s word, we begin to live our Christianity – even among others. By reaching out to others in this way, God's truth will become clearer to all in the Church, and our fellowship as God's children will grow. We need to encourage all brethren who are truly serving God. Preserving God’s truth is everyone's duty and responsibility.

Jude :

- 3** *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

For so many, God’s truth is being forgotten and watered down. We need to be firmly founded in the basics.

In Galatians 1 we find a situation just like the one we have in the churches of God today. There are many who no longer contend for the faith which was established in the Church at its inception by Jesus Christ and the apostles. There are practices in the churches that "look" religious, but they are not true Christianity. The apostle Paul made an important point to the Galatians.

Galatians 1:

- 6** I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:
- 7 Which is not another;** but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Who is troubling us and perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ? We need to know! As maturing Christians we are not to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

Ephesians 4:

- 14** That we henceforth be no more children [church brethren], tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

If it is **not** the Gospel of Christ—it is **not** another valid Gospel—it is a false Gospel, of false faith or a substitution for the True Gospel. It happened in Paul's day and he recognized it for what it was – substitution religion which has curses attached to it. Paul tells the Galatians – I gave it to you straight – how have you deviated from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ?

Galatians 1:

- 8** But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Hold on to the truth – live it – even if the entire world is gone haywire!

Galatians 1:

- 9** As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach **any other gospel** unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

That should be the desire of every one of us – to earnestly contend for the true faith which was once delivered unto the saints. That is because we are buffeted by **shifting winds** of doctrine that take many off course. We should seek to **know and live** the Christianity that Jesus taught to the apostles – who in turn taught it to the first century Church of God. The true Church of God was immediately battered by false and substitutionary doctrine – and it is the same today.

Because they had turned their backs on the practice of the true gospel of Jesus Christ, they were in danger of missing out on the spiritual promises God had made to the Church. Oh, they still kept the Sabbath (in a ritualistic way) and they continued to observe God's law with regard to clean and unclean meats to a tee – in minute exactness, but they neglected to serve the brethren in a Godly manner.

Galatians 5:

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by Godly love serve one another.

The Galatians had ceased **laying their lives down** for one another in favor of ritualistic religion. So many of the Church brethren today wave forgotten what our calling and true Christianity are all about. Today, church members have ceased laying their lives down for one another, and substituted looking to men at a headquarters [rather than trusting God and looking to His word].

Today, church leaders have raised "church government" to a par with God's authority. Our brethren are being taught that the only thing necessary to be in the Kingdom is to be in the right **church organization** and support its TV program. Right after the Footwashing Jesus taught:

John 13:

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Jesus laid His life down for us – are we willing to do the same for our brethren? True Christianity is not easy – but I want to ask the question – is it too difficult? Is God asking too much of us? Paul answers this question:

Romans 12:

1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, **which is your reasonable service.***

Paul shows us that God does not ask too much of us when He asks us to lay our lives down to help one another into the Kingdom of God. He says that it is our "reasonable service." Today, too many church members have forgotten how to serve one another in a Godly manner, and have simply become "seat warmers" at their Saturday social gatherings. God is not interested in those who "Play Church." Some of our brethren got so "religious" that they are no longer with God – though they have been convinced that they are with God. Sure, they warmed a bench every Saturday and dutifully brought a casserole to every pot-luck.

People erroneously think God will overlook their weakness and sins – because they do the other things so well. They do not know God's guideline which says:

James 2:

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law [that's good works], and yet **offend in one point**, he is guilty of all.

They didn't eat pork chops or chocolate Easter bunnies. They didn't have statues or Christmas trees. They didn't eat shrimp or catfish, and they left home on Halloween. They believe that they were good Christians.

And they did not practice Pure Religion, or do Good Works, either.

In place of the Christian precepts Jesus taught of forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, Christ's love, repentance, mercy, compassion, etc. – too many church members substitute their versions of corporate pre-eminence; their rendering of the calendar; their pronouncement of holy names, they defend organizational loyalty and church rivalry for their religion. They go to services for the social aspects – the potlucks and being with their friends.

Brethren, do we put all of the things **first** that God says not to put first?

Like, "I want to be with my friends. I enjoy the potlucks, we have a wonderful choir, Our group is the biggest work?"

Brethren, that is **not** what our faith is about!

They have been taught to believe that they have to belong to a **church group** – rather than the Body of Christ. That "big organization" concept is so deeply ingrained that they remain – even in fear of those leaders who are lording it over the brethren. The brethren need to find good strong teaching while experiencing the true love of God.

A problem with every one of the political corporate organizations is the fact that there is a lack of Godly brotherly love for **all** the brethren. Ministerial leaders want something big, powerful, competition, large numbers, control, a huge structure, a recognizable brand, something physically tangible to be able to show to the world that they are the most religious – It says to them, "God is with us – God is with me!" Vying for power and control goes on at church headquarters much more than many want to believe.

Too many brethren love their own "clicks" – but other brethren are not considered. They do not even follow the Golden Rule that Jesus taught:

Luke 6:

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

We should be one people – all of us who are led by God's Holy Spirit.

Luke 6:

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them.

But that is EXACTLY what is happening in the big corporate groups – is it not?

Luke 6:

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

Our Christian care and concern must extend to all who are led by God's Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Romans 8:

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Brethren, have you noticed how in the big groups – when services are over that the conversation is not about the sermon, scripture, or anything that would edify or encourage a person to want to become more Godly in their lives. Part of that lack of focus is because the messages have become so watered down in most of the bigger groups.

Sermons should do what God intends for them to do-to encourage us, increase our knowledge, and show that God is and always has been a very Loving God and His expectations for us are to do great things both in this life and the next. God's people need to fed.

The mistake the brethren are making today is the same mistake the Galatians made – that of an heretical **substitute religion**. They have moved away from the simplicity in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:

9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Shouldn't we be faithful as God is faithful?

1 Corinthians 1:

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be **perfectly joined together** in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Are we brethren in the churches of God **perfectly joined together** in the same mind and the same judgment? I think not – but Christ says that we should be – so we should be working on it every day. How often have there been terrible sins in the church and people refuse to get involved?

That is something to think about, brethren.

Are we unwilling to help turn our brother from the error of his way – and help him into the Kingdom?

Galatians 6:

1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

We certainly are not to get the big head in a situation of helping out a brother or sister in Christ.

God does **not** give us the **option** of whether or not to get involved.

Galatians 6:

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Do you want to get **right with** God? Bear one another's burdens.

We need to ask ourselves, "Have I helped someone else in their difficult walk?" "Have I borne their burdens?"

Galatians 6:

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

This applies to a lot of the church brethren today. We think, "I went to church last Sabbath, and saw all my buddies there." Then we conclude that we did what God wanted us to do on the Sabbath, and we think, "I am something now." "It is me and Christ, and I am going to be in the Kingdom."

Brethren, Let's not think that we are in good standing with God when we are not doing what Jesus Christ says to do.

Galatians 6:

- 4** But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.

We are all guilty! We all have our sins, our weaknesses, our transgressions and our faults. We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and we will give an answer for ourselves.

Romans 14:

- 10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- 12** So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

And, when we have had opportunity to show Godly love a brother, to lay our life down for a brother, if we did not do it then we have not done as Jesus Christ commanded us to do. Jesus said we are to lay our life down just as He did. That is the job of a Christian. That is what we were called to. We were not called into a social club of good friends and prosperity. We were called to walk in the steps of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:

- 6** Let him that is taught in the word communicate [share] unto him that teaches [Paul] in all good things.

Paul is talking about resources here, he is talking about the things that you have an abundance of, whether it is clothes, food, money, connections, whatever you have. We are not just feeding ourselves. God will call some in the last hour.

Paul went from town to town. He was stoned, beat up and brutalized, because he did not know who God the Father would yet call. It is the same today. Let us get the message out to the extent that God gives us the strength.

Galatians 6:

- 7** Be not deceived; God is not mocked [defrauded or deceived by what is really going on]: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

- 8** For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption [doomed to perish]; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Are we laying our lives down—are we provoking one another to good works?

To have life everlasting we have to live just like Jesus Christ lived. Some people think that you just have to get in the right group, in the right organization.

Brethren, the narrow path to the Kingdom of God is much more difficult to traverse than that.

Galatians 6:

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

We shall attain the Kingdom of God, if we faint not.

Galatians 6:

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto the [brethren] who are of the household of faith.

You start with the church brethren. It means that you guide them, you lead them, you point them in the right direction, and you encourage them. Now Paul is concluding this letter and he is saying, "Do not settle for second rate religion, which is no religion at all. You Galatians, you church people, you are very special, you are set apart, and you are holy people."

Paul told them, "All the biblical promises are specifically for you, not for the world at this time." No one is a Christian just because he goes to church on Saturday – the Jews do that. Idle congregations quickly become back-sliders. A true Christian is one in whom God's Holy Spirit dwells, whose attitude and behavior are consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ. A Christian seeks God's way of life, His thoughts and His will. A real Christian is one who is willing to do what Jesus said to do.

John 13:

17 If you know these things," Jesus exclaimed, "happy are you if you do them."

True Christianity is a life of behavior modification and Godly character development in all that he does, says, and thinks. In James 2 we see that God's people are referred to as the poor of this world rich in faith.

James 2:

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Let's close with Micah 6 where we see the proper attitude that God seeks in His people.

Micah 6:

8 He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

End: There Must Be Heresies