



*Clouds without
water*

*maybe some wind
even a little thunder*

*but
no rain*

Clouds without Water

Come easy teachers, clouds without water

'These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.'

Jude 1:12-13

False teachers have crept in

There has been a change within Christianity as people are becoming biblically illiterate and easily swayed by preachers who appear to know Scripture, but who change it to make it sound more appealing to the general public. These good time preachers are attracting huge crowds, as Jesus did when He fed the thousands, (Matt 14:21) healed the sick, (Mark 1:34) and performed miracles. (John 6:2) But

when Jesus began to teach the hard truths of the sacrifices need to be true to the gospel, “*many of his disciples turned away and no longer followed him.*” (John 6:66) This falling away of popularity did not cause Jesus to water down His message. He continued to teach truth whether people liked it or not. (John 8:29) Many preachers today who look for big followings, do not teach what Jesus taught about the realities of a personal cross, and avoid any falling away of their followers.

Many holy rollers think they have the truth, believing disease is to be a thing of the past for them; the normal struggle and poverty is no longer a problem if they believe enough, so God will provide all they desire. They no longer see themselves affected by the consequences of sin in this world if they have enough faith. They believe God has restored them fully to the state mankind had before sin came into the world. They believe they rule in God's kingdom as His children now, so there is no longer a need for them to deny the world

because their God is the owner of all the cattle on all the hills. They believe it is not necessary to deny themselves any good thing, because God loves His children and wants to share all His riches with them. They insist He wants them to be blessed every day with all the world has to offer. But is this in the Bible?

These messages often lack mention of the problem of disobedience and rebellion, of the need for repentance, prayer, uncompromising obedience, and death to self, holiness, sacrifice, suffering, and hell that the Bible speaks about. This empty preaching lacks sound teaching. The message has little challenge or need for personal self judgment. Yet the scripture calls us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. 2 Cor 13:5

These endless blessing promoters are like clouds without water. They are empty clouds because they are in ignorance of the truth of God's word which alone gives peace and fulfilment. But their message is appealing to

worldly people. The comfortable life movement is very popular with many in the world; and why wouldn't people who are looking for material success as a sign of God's blessing, be excited about being invited to a party where you can have everything now? However Jesus didn't call people to a party in a rose garden, He called people to come and follow His example, by denying themselves and taking up their cross daily so that they can enter the Kingdom of God. Luke 9:23

This comfortable life fan club should take notice of the temptation of Christ, where *'the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."* (Matt 4:8-9) In other words, Satan says you can have it all now, you don't have to deny yourself, you don't have to take up your cross and die, all you have to do is just bow down to him and it is all yours.

The prosperity message includes personal happiness, financial wealth and physical health for all believers who have sufficient faith. However from the Bible we can see God has not promised to heal all believers. We can see that many came to be healed after Paul miraculously healed Publius's father. (Acts 28:8-9) But two decades later we see Paul mention his good friend Ephaphroditus, who had been very sick. He had previously shown the gift of healing, so why didn't he heal his friend? It appears that miraculous healing wasn't the purpose of the gift of healing at this time. We then look to Paul leaving Trophimus sick at Miletus. (2 Tim 4:20) Why didn't he heal him if healing is for all believers and he had the gift? But we still see good time preachers promising healing for all with enough faith, as if it is dependent on them and not God.

Instead of stressing the importance of comfort and wealth, the Bible warns against pursuing it. Believers, especially leaders in the church, (1 Tim 3:3) are to be free from the love of

money. (Heb 13:5) *The love of money leads to all kinds of evil.* (1 Tim 6:10) Jesus warned, “*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.*” (Luke 12:15) Jesus said, “*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.*” (Matt 6:19) This contradiction between good time's teaching and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is best summed up in the words of Jesus, “*You cannot serve both God and money.*”

Matt 6:24

Worldly success weakens Biblical teaching

While not all their teaching is wrong, there are some serious weaknesses which need to be addressed if the Church is to witness truthfully to Christ. We need to be vigilant in our faith because false teaching sneaks in under the cover of much which is proper and true. For this reason, false teaching is dangerous because it is shielded by some truth

so that it is able to cause serious damage to the Churches foundations while going unnoticed. It is also dangerous because many who are not familiar enough with the whole truth of God's word are easily deceived with promises which are desirable when we want to gratify immature worldly desires.

If the teaching of false leaders is 95% true, many will assume the rest they advocate is also true. A little wild yeast will go through the whole loaf of bread. A little error is a major point of concern if we are to remain faithful in the whole.

These false teachers are silent on the Lord's teaching which says those who follow Him will suffer at the hand of people who should know better. *"They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God."* (John 16:2) As Paul indicated; *'Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.'* 2 Tim 3:12

They are silent on the need to enter the kingdom of God via the narrow gate which is in the opposite direction of the broad way of the world. (Matt 7:13-14) They ignore the fact that the Lord calls us out of the materialistic world in order for us to abide in Him. They also ignore the teaching of the Lord on the need to seek first the kingdom of God by trusting in God and not to seek our treasures in the world. (Matt 6:19-24) For if we believe we walk in the light but look to money for our security, we are in the dark, and how dark is that darkness.

Matt 6:23

False teachers ignore the teaching of Paul that it is enough to have food and clothing in order to be content. (1 Tim 6:8) Instead they insist that because of God's grace, He wouldn't want His people to suffer any loss; they can have all their heart desires. But the Bible teaches us that while God does want the very best for us, the very best He can do for us is to see us transformed into the image of His Son if we suffer with Him. (Rom 8:17, 28-29) The

Bible goes on to show how He works towards this goal regardless of the circumstances we may face as we walk on earth, weather in good times or in suffering many things, He will not let His love be separated from us or us from Him.

Rom 8:31-39

The Lord tells us that those who seek worldly success already have their reward. (Matt 6:5) The Lord teaches us we can only abide in His love and produce the fruit the Father seeks in our life, if we obey Him just as He obeyed the Father. *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."* (John 15:10) If we seek the rewards Jesus spoke of we need to obey all He has commanded us.

Many false teachers can only teach what they do because they do not handle the word of God thoroughly enough to be aware of the right context of the passages in question in relation to the whole Bible. They are often

unaware of the way the passage fits into the whole word of God. Instead they handle the Bible like a chicken strutting around feeding on the bits and pieces it likes which get its attention. Any scripture taken out of the context which God gave it is no longer His word but ours; and useless.

Any text which can be used to justify their emphasis on material success and physical well being will be eagerly sought out; while in their blindness they will be silent on the Lord's teaching that we need to deny our self and take up our cross daily if we are to follow Him into the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:23) Self denial is impossible when we insist on self promotion. If I am determined to seek what I want, it is impossible for me to deny myself. Self promotion must be replaced with Christ's promotion in all we do and think. Self denial means denying ourselves in relation to the world, its aspirations and desires. Self promotion is binding us to the world and its aspirations. Success preachers say God wants

us to be fulfilled in the world. But Jesus came to separate us from the world. *“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”* (John 15:19) *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”*

John 17:16-17

Worldly success lacks understanding of the big picture

While the Bible teaches us about what God has done now in giving us a new life; it also teaches us about the not yet; the redemption of our bodies and a life without tears or pain; which is yet to come when Jesus comes again according to His sovereign will. Yes, we are saved now, we are saved from the power of sin to control us, and we are being transformed into the image of God's Son; but then, one glorious day we will be like Him. When Jesus comes again we will be changed

to be like Him, and we will rule with Him.

Rev 21:3-7

But until then we are in the world but not of the world. (John 17:16) We have not yet received the redemption of our bodies which occurs when Jesus returns. (Rom 8:23) We are free from the power of sin to control us, but we still suffer sins consequences in a fallen world. We are set free from sins power in order to war against it with the power of God's Spirit. Now we battle with the forces of darkness by putting to death that which is still earthly in us by God's Spirit, (Rom 8:13) while we proclaim the power of the gospel to redeem mankind from sin's darkness so they can enter the light of the kingdom of God's Son. (Col 1:13) Jesus teaches us that everything will not always be good; we will face tribulation and trials. John 6:33

Worldly success is weak on the Spirit

Personal fulfilment teaching sees the Holy Spirit as a power to be put to use for whatever

the believer wills. Worldly success teachers are constantly telling their people they need a special anointing of the Holy Spirit, and completely ignore what the Bible teaches on the Spirit.

The Bible tells we have received the Spirits anointing if we obey Him, "*And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.*" (Acts 5:32) We don't have to pray for anointing, we already have the anointing if we obey God. (1 John 2:20) Jesus tells us "*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8) Paul tells us in Romans we have the Spirit. '*However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*' (Rom 8:9) It is through obedience that we remain filled with the Spirit so that we will

not carry out the deeds of the flesh. *'I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'* (Gal 5:16) The Spirit was given to keep us in the Lord, not for us to use in order to put our attention on ourselves and what we want.

There is an awful consequence for false teaching

Worldly success teachers have people looking to external evidence of God's grace in physical blessings; whenever life takes a turn for the worst, they think God has abandoned them and is a long way away. Since false teachers look to external blessings in the ordinary things of life, difficult circumstances and people have them thinking God is not on their side. But the proof of the Spirit's presence is peace and love in a humble heart.

Since they look to a life of comfort and good times, when things are naturally the way they are as a result of mans sin, they think the Holy Spirit is far off, and they look for a fresh

anointing, not knowing they already have His anointing and they can know they are already filled if they walk with Him in obedience and truth. They have not learnt that the Spirit binds them too Himself as He dwells in them as the living temple of God. 1 Cor 6:19

Since these seekers look for daily material blessings, they will not see God is blessing them and training them by using the struggles of life as a test of their faith so He can approve their growth as His children. (1 Pet 1:7) They will not realise they need to look to see what God is doing in them to change them more fully into the likeness of His Son. As a result they will not be able to cooperate with God and see evidence of constant growth in spiritual maturity. Instead they will have the idea that sanctification is all God's work in them as they enjoy life on earth.

Since good time's seekers have an external point of reference, believing a comfortable life with good health as the normal, when

satins world of brokenness disturbs their slumber, they will experience a life of fear and anxiety resulting from a lack of spiritual growth and maturity, because they are being held back from a life of mature Christian faith. Looking for good times in the world will make them vulnerable to Satan's attack because things aren't always as good as they desire, when this happens they think God has let them down and He cannot be relied upon.

Worldly success seekers talk about Jesus a lot, but do little in following His teaching and obeying all He has commanded us to do. So they will continue to struggle with the realities of Satan's deceptions until they learn to read the whole word of God with understanding as the Holy Spirit fills them with true knowledge so they can gain the benefits of light and truth.

Because good time's seekers rely too much on putting on a good show; and focus too much on spiritual gifts they think make them look more spiritual; they want to make a lot of

noise in their worship to emphasise their greatness, forgetting God has big ears and doesn't look for a good performance, but a humble and quietly thankful heart. Some who have gained financial benefit have done away with noise and replace it with the clever use of lights and the masterful use of music in a way that looks more like the world's greatest entertainment.

They pay too much attention to performance, what we wear and the quality of our dwellings and the things we have in the world. This is a true sign they are looking in the wrong place for God's truth, they are looking to vain things to give them the peace that only comes from walking with God, regardless of our sometimes difficult circumstances.

The hidden message of good time's teachers to the world is that you can have God and the world at the same time. If you say the things they say, and believe the things they teach, you can have your dreams and visions of

worldly success fulfilled, you can go for it with God's blessings. Listen to a real preacher that lived long ago, who talked a lot of sense about good times. *“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”* Ecclesiastes 1:2

The Lord Jesus tells us to deny ourselves and to take up our cross daily. (Luke 9:23) Some think we die once when we come to the Lord, but the Jesus says we must die daily if we are to overcome the devil. *'Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.'* 1 Peter 5:8

False teachers need to be exposed

A number of prominent pastors in the world assert that: “Worldly success preaching soft-pedals the consequences of Adam’s fall, sin, pain and death and their New Testament antidote: Jesus’ atoning sacrifice and the importance of repentance.” Critics of the easy way point out the Bible says Christians are assured of persecution (2 Tim. 3:12) suffering

(Acts 9:16) and the need for self-denial.

Mark 8:34

The conclusion is confusion

The easy way often comes in an invitation to accept Christ. "Your sins are forgiven, come to Jesus just as you are, for His yoke is easy and His burdens are light, come and enjoy the full blessing of God." But you hardly hear the call to repentance by making a complete turn from the world in an act of self denial by taking up the cross of Christ to go and make disciples. But are they surrendered to Jesus to obey Him completely, or do they have a new improved version of the gospel for themselves? If we are not willing to die for Jesus, Jesus is only a ticket to perfect health and financial wealth, but death to life itself.

False teaching confuses believer's minds and limits the Churches effectiveness to be God's means of salvation to the world through the real gospel. It attracts many who want to keep a firm hold on the world while thinking they

have entered the narrow way of the kingdom of God.

Matt 7:13-14

There are many who say coming into the kingdom of God and enjoying His rest is as simple as accepting Jesus Christ as saviour; indicating that the process is easy, because they say His burden is light and His yoke is easy.

Matt 11:28-30

Those who use this saying of Jesus to promise a painless birth into the kingdom of God misrepresent the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes His yoke, (the harness of His authority) and His burden, (the cost of discipleship) are easy, but only for those who have died to the world and themselves so there is no resistance and struggle against Him harnessing His life to our life. The truth of what Jesus requires is also made clear in other places of the Bible. The Lord Jesus Himself says, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”* (John 12:24) So

unless a grain first dies it cannot produce anything, but if it dies it can produce 100 fold. (Matt 13:8-9) *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”* Luke 9:23

This process of dying in order to live is the way we change from darkness to light, from death to life in Christ; and dying isn't easy. For if we would save our life we will lose it. Immediately after saying the grain must die to produce fruit, Jesus said; *“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal”* John 12:25

If we are not making disciples, and teaching them to obey all Jesus teaches, we are not loving Him, but pleasing ourselves. He is watching. The promise of a new life without death to the old life is a promise of clouds without water. False prophets call people to the harvest who haven't taken part in the planting. The death of Christ and the death of His followers are tied together. For God's

love has two crosses; Jesus Christ's first, and then ours. If we die with Him, we shall also live with Him.

Clouds without water are concerned with the interest of men to the extent that God's interests are neglected. Jesus turned and said to Peter, "*Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.*"

Matt 16:23

The only place to find water that is worth anything is in Jesus Christ who offers and endless supply to those who believe in Him. "*Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.*" (John 4:14) "*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'*"

John 7:38

Abide in Him

Living Water Resources



Come to the River

*clouds without water, carried along by winds;
autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead,
uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up
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Jude 1:12-13

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