

Don't rock the Boat



We must rock the boat

Cosmic conflict is ours if we are to be true to God. *'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.'* Eph 6:12

In the beginning God gave all His created beings free will, angels, and man; but Satan decided he wanted to be equal with God. God had given him a high place in the angelic order, but Lucifer the devil wanted to take God's place.

“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ‘I will ascend above the heights of

the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.' Isa 14:12-15

Satan is the prince of darkness who was cast out of heaven to earth and now deceives mankind. *'And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.'*

Rev 12:9

Now Satan is the god of this world. (2 Cor 4:4) In his craftiness deceived Eve. (Gen 3:1) Satan uses our deceitful pride to question God. This is the pride we inherit from our biological father Adam. It was this pride which is used to distort the truth in exchange for a lie.

Rom 1:24-28

However to even contest God's truth, is to place ourselves on an equal level with God. The devils sin of pride was reproduced in Adam and Eve, and since we are their

descendants according to the flesh, the pride of rebellion is born in all of us. The rebellion of Satan, who is in conflict with God, is reproduced in millions of people every day. Satan achieves his work of turning people away from obedience to God by appealing to our weak human nature. He does this through the deception, often by presenting himself as an angel of light.

2 Cor 11:14

But the devil is still Satan, the prince of darkness who was cast out of heaven and now deceives mankind. Those who listen to him are living in the darkness and are blind to the truth of God.

Now the deceiver lives amongst us with his many assistants who help to promote his agenda, for Satan also comes to us as false teachers of light in our churches. *'For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.'*

2 Cor 11:13-14

Those who listen to Satan are blind to God

'In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.'

2 Cor 4:3-4

When their blindness is exposed they say, "don't rock the boat, you keep your opinion about living solely for God to yourself, and keep your ideas of taking up your cross to yourself as well, as for us, we are comfortable doing our own thing and going to church on Sundays." "But if you want to get along, if you want to be accepted, come with us and enjoy life to the fullest."

'Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.'

Eph 4:18

However we are called on by our Lord to be true to Him in all things while we are tempted by all things. Jesus calls on us to go on

resisting the error being promoted by the enemy of God, even if facing persecution and death.

'And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.'

Rev 12:11

This means there will always be a conflict of ideas to stand against in order to get to the truth until Christ returns. God needs to be Lord of our hearts and minds if we are to remain true and not compromise our faith. To be sure, we also need to be renewed in our minds wherever error has crept in. *'And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.'*

Rom 12:2

Satan resists being exposed

However Satan does not want us to question his deceptions. Satan denies we need the light

of God to expose his lies with the truth. He refuses the idea that to be in conflict with his ideas can in any way have positive results. However, if his deception is not dealt with, he wins, hands down, no worries; and we lose. The devil doesn't like to lose, he plays at a war he cannot win because Christ has already defeated him by His death and resurrection, so Satan rages on earth.

"Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

Rev 12:12

Consequently, spiritual purity and holy renewal require ongoing personal conflict within ourselves and in the world if we are to grow in the knowledge of God and resist the lies of the evil one.

We must take responsibility for the conflict we must participate in if we are to live as God's people. *'For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit*

*you are putting to death the deeds of the body,
you will live.'* Rom 8:13

Spiritual conflict involves the church

*'So the dragon was enraged with the woman,
and went off to make war with the rest of her
children, who keep the commandments of God
and hold to the testimony of Jesus.'* Rev 12:17

The woman and the rest of her children in this verse speak of the Church, the real people of God. Satan is enraged with the Church and attacks at every opportunity. Therefore our faithfulness according to the truth of God requires us to contend with others concerning the word of God. And because we are not the holders of all God's truth all the time, we need His word and others who are of the true faith to get back on track.

This process of overcoming the conflict between God and Satan is needed so that we maintain the truth of the Lord. *'Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to*

write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.' Jude 1:3

All relationships under God must go through this process of purification by confronting error if we are to become the people God intended; a people who by their obedience have intimacy with Christ, and love each other warmly. When God's word tells us to contend for the faith, it means we are to maintain, hold, claim, argue, profess, affirm, declare, pronounce, and plead for the gospel.

A refusal to face the truth of God's word results in isolating us from Christ and prevents spiritual growth in the knowledge of God. If we love Jesus and each other, we need to contend for the truth.

Contending for the faith necessarily requires dealing with the conflict of opposing ideas. *'We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of*

God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.' 2 Cor 10:5

Failure to confront error brings judgment

There are many ways to compromise God's truth, but the result is always the same. Judgment!

To the church at Ephesus Jesus wrote: "*But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*" Rev 2:4, 7

The church at Ephesus had kept true doctrine, but it was only head knowledge, for they lacked the complete devotion of God's love needed to walk in fellowship with God. And this lack of love would have been evident in their daily lives with each other and the world.

To the church in Pergamum Jesus wrote: "*But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit*

acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans."

Rev 2:14-15, 17

The church in Pergamum compromised their faith by accepting the teaching and practice of the ungodly religious people of their world.

To the church in Thyatira Jesus wrote: "*But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."*

Rev 2:20, 26-27

The church in Thyatira had allowed a false teacher to compromise their faith and their behaviour so that they lived immorally before God. The church on a whole had not maintained its purity in holiness.

To the church in Sardis He wrote: "*So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you*

will not know at what hour I will come to you."

Rev 3:3, 5

The church in Sardis had a reputation for being the place to be. But instead of being alive they were dead. They were not living by what they had received and heard of God's word. They compromised their faith.

To the church in Laodicea, *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."* Rev 3:15-16, 21

The church in Laodicea had become wealthy and self reliant, but they were spiritually poverty stricken in their faith. Having the worlds goods had deceived them into thinking they had it all, but they had become nominal in their faith, they had the name of Christ but not the life of Christ, so they had nothing. They had allowed things of the world and personal comfort to compromise their faith and reliance on God. They had weakened their

position so much they were something Jesus would vomit into the gutter.

These five churches in Revelation were admonished because they hadn't kept themselves pure by confronting compromise. Satan had weakened the churches by encouraging their people to compromise their faith by not sticking to God's word and confronting worldly practice and ungodly ideas. The seven Churches in Revelation are an example of the Churches in the world today.

At least Smyrna and Philadelphia remained true, even though they suffered the most. Their joint testimony of their stand against fear of reprisal shows that unwillingness to compromise will always attract opposition and persecution. The Book of Revelation reveals the spiritual struggle between God and Satan will mean God's people who remain true may lose their jobs, be isolated from family, and be imprisoned and put to death.

Seeking to fit in and not rock the boat is the way we attempt to avoid conflict and therefore possible rejection and persecution. However, a refusal to confront error is a denial of our love for God and each other.

Failure to confront error is a denial of God

Failure to do what God wants means our instructions come from His great enemy. Some who resist the truth blindly aid and support the enemy; then they want to silence confrontation by saying, "don't argue."

Unwillingness to deal with issues is living like an ostrich, and denies the other person the possibility of working out the life God is working in us. However, we are told that failure to confront error will end in judgement.

While the primary responsibility for keeping watch over the flock and the teaching in the Church belongs to its leaders; but all the people of the congregation carry personal responsibility as well.

Deceptive tactic accuse believers

When people say they will not argue they are using a defensive strategy against change. If we persist in trying to work something out, in their eyes we become the aggressor. If we are seen as the aggressor, we are accused of being evil, and we don't have to be listened to; we must be wrong.

This is controlling behaviour and a refusal to listen to God's truth. If people won't listen, there is nothing to change. Don't argue means "I am perfect" and have nothing to deal with. "Leave me alone". But it is exactly this unwillingness to accept the truth, or stand up for what is true by confronting problems of teaching and behaviour that caused the Churches to be admonished by Jesus.

Jesus promises blessing to the overcomers

And even while they compromised, Jesus' purpose was to call them to repentance and reinstate them as a healthy and holy people who would live up to the life they had

received through His death and resurrection. So the Lord Jesus promised a blessing for those who would be true and make a stand for Him by overcoming the adversity coming from the unbelievers.

To the churches Jesus wrote: *"I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God."* (Rev 2:7) *"to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."* (Rev 2:17) *"he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON."* (Rev 2:26-27) *"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."* (Rev 3:5) *"I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."* Rev 3:21

Confronting error is a lifestyle principle

This principle of confronting error in our churches should also be found in our personal relationships in the Lord. Without healthy confrontation, the churches will cease to have any power from the Spirit, (the lampstand will be removed), and without the leading of the Spirit Christian marriages will be a sham because they will reflect the world's attitudes. Without working through personal relationships to maintain purity of the Spirit, and upholding what the Lord taught, relationships will fail, with man, and with God.

The churches in Revelation were admonished for compromise because they gave in to the pressure of harassment and the threat of persecution. The two churches that did not compromise their faith, Smyrna and Philadelphia, suffered the most. The churches that compromised had some comfort in unfaithfulness.

Beasts and the dragon

Under the influence of the dragon, the world says, Don't rock the boat, play it safe, you don't want to get hurt, you don't want to be left out, don't you want to be successful, so take the path of least resistance and join us , you might as well, everyone else has. It's better to live in comfort than die now like a pauper. After all you have a right to do things your way.

The hideous beast of the sea, (Rev 13:1) which is all humanistic evolutionary organisations and governments; and the grotesque beast of the earth, (Rev 13:11) all the fallen churches and false religious powers; are united under the dragon (Rev 12:3-4) in promoting these ideas and more through every technology and advanced human resource available to man in order to deceive the people of God.

In this world churches will suffer, at no time did the Lord indicate He would prevent their suffering, but only that He would remain with

them in their suffering, this is indicated by the presence of the lampstands which represented the Holy Spirit. For those who felt safer by giving way to the pressure and accepted compromise, the threat of the removal of the Spirit was proclaimed.

Upholding God's principles will always bring suffering to some degree or other, whether physical suffering and death, or emotional and psychological suffering that comes from members of our own household, through isolation and rejection. Jesus told us this truth.

"Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW."

Matt 10:32-35

Confessing Jesus not only means claiming Him as saviour, but also means following His teaching without compromise. Paul's second letter to Timothy makes it clear that standing up for the truth of God's word will result in troubles from those who refuse to obey God. *'Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.'* 2 Tim 3:12

We must rock the boat

There are times when we have to confront error if we are not to become total hypocrites. This can be difficult because most people want to avoid conflict. But God calls on us to face the conflict and maintain the truth and guard against error or lose our blessings. We can see from the Lord's letter to the church in Smyrna that they needed to overcome even at the cost of imprisonment or loss of life.

Rev 2:10

There are many that a lot of churches have removed the difficult requirement for a life of Christian faith by not mentioning the need to

take up our cross in order to follow Jesus. This is done so that people can easily join their church, with the result that the gospel of God has been compromised, and the standards of the world have been ushered in to a place which is meant to be holy. To suggest to those Churches that what they have is not really the church Jesus wants, is to be told "that's only your opinion"

However if we are unwilling to confront error and rock the boat, we will be surrendering our responsibility before Christ, and be a party to the devil's deception in his war against the people of God. The devil has no power if he has no people. The need to confront the behaviour and ideas which oppose the standard God requires of godly people.

God's truth is true in every situation

We cannot take the attitude that we only observe God's standards while we are carrying out religious duties; instead we are to know we actually embody His character and

standard by His indwelling Spirit, so we live His way in all things, at all time. And *'in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'* 1 Thess 5:18

So if God would take a stand for holiness, we must take a stand as His representatives; we are His priesthood on earth and His beloved children. Therefore we not only to agree with His, we must contend for that truth in every situation of our lives. We are to contend for the truth in every situation of our lives, especially those that come under God's covenantal order, marriages included. It's not possible to divide our lives up into separate parts so that God's truth is only true in a religious sense in church on Sunday, and absent in our homes or the place of our employment.

We must be prepared for a war

The apostle Peter warns us to make a stand in the face of spiritual attack. *'Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil,*

prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.' 1 Pet. 5:8-9

Those of the household of God must guard their hearts. *'Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.'* Heb 3:12-13

'But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defence to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.' 1 Pet 3:15

"Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

Matt 24:42

Rock the Boat



Living Water Resources

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