

Heartless Faith

This passage strikes close to my heart. Although my path was the opposite direction from what 1 Timothy 4 speaks to. I came out of a belief system devoted to deceitful spirits. Praise God, He brought me to Christ the only eternal truth. The thought of departing from the truth into a false belief system is a terrifying thought and yet, we clearly read in 1st Timothy 4:1, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith.” God the Holy Spirit says this will happen, which means it is fact and history proves this to be true. This is the key point of this passage and the rest of the passage describes elements of this departure.

This passage follows chapter 3 where Paul just made the point that new believers should not be placed into leadership, but proven over time. We can see why this is true as we study the first 3 verses of chapter 4, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.” Verse 3 says false systems, “require abstinence from foods” and brings to my mind bacon or as I am fond of calling it meat candy. But, I digress.

When someone knows Christ as their Lord and Savior the thought of them abandoning Christ is difficult for me. This is exactly what we will explore this morning. How can such a terrible thing, the leaving of one’s faith in Christ, happen? This is what John clarified throughout his gospel account between believing “on” or “in” Christ. “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to

me shall not hunger, and whoever believes **in** me shall never thirst.³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” (John 6:35-37)

If God has called you – you will not be cast out and if God has not called you, then you are spiritually dead and cannot take the scriptures into your heart and soul. The condition of the heart has always been the core issue as far back as Cain. “Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam’s error and perished in Korah’s rebellion.” (Jude 11) Who can tell me what Korah’s rebellion is? Well, to find out read the chapter 16 of Numbers.

From Cain we advance to 2nd Chronicles chapter 25 where there is the story of the king of Judah by the name of Amaziah (**am·ats·yaw**) dating to about 800 BC.

“Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem ...² And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet not with a whole heart.” (2 Chronicles 25:1-2) The Scripture says of him, initially, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord but “not with a whole heart.” He functioned in concurrence with the religion of Israel on the outside. He knew it. He understood it. He behaved by its ethics, but not with a committed heart. What Chronicles says is, he had a heartless external religion.

He performed Israel’s religion only on the outside. His heart knew not God on the inside. So soon he was lured away into idolatry. In that same chapter, verse 14, “After Amaziah (**am·ats·yaw**) came from striking down the Edomites, he brought the gods of the men of Seir and set them up as his gods and worshiped them, making offerings to them.” (2 Chronicles 25:14) God sent a prophet to bring the king back into line, but the king rejected God’s prophet. He sought false gods and his life ended tragically. His own people murdered him. In the closing comment of verse 27 it says, “he turned away from the LORD.” You see because of his position he made up his mind to serve the Lord for a period of time. But his heart was not in the

serving.

Departing from the faith is nothing new. It happens today. It happened in the church at Ephesus where Timothy was when Paul wrote this letter. It happened in the history of Israel with everyone from kings down to farmers. There are always people who will understand intellectually, who will behave externally, at least for a period of time, according to the revelation of God but who have no heart for God. The writer of Hebrews wrote, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.” (Hebrews 3:12) The issue from the beginning of the time of man has always been the heart. I have heard the longest short distance there is, is the 18 inches from a person’s brain to their heart. If God does awaken one’s soul the distance is too great to bridge.

Heart of the Apostate

There is a word that defines this issue of the false heart, that word is apostate. **An apostate is someone who departs from the faith they know, the faith they understand, and the faith they previously affirmed.** An apostate is not someone who never knew but someone who knew, not someone who never believed but someone who believed intellectually, not someone who never behaved as faithful but someone who once behaved according to the revelation of God. But because their heart was never in it, because they never really knew God, they were lured away by the alluring voices of the demons behind idols and false religious systems. They were led away, it says in verse 1, by seducing spirits and the doctrines of demons to depart from the faith. These false teachers who serve the father of lies, it says in verse 2, has seared people’s conscience. They become as committed as Saul was to serve the father of lies when he sought out Christians or believers in the Way to arrest them and have them put to death. It was only by an act of God the scales were removed from his eyes and Saul became Paul. It is only by an act of great mercy

and grace that God has removed the scales from our eyes and brought us into the light of His truth.

The problem is that if we do not study the Word of God and take it into our minds and hearts, we can easily be made to believe the lie. Paul says this is because “even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” (2 Corinthians 11:14) You see Satan and his fallen angels call people to worship here or there, this system or that system, this idol or that idol, but behind these systems and behind the idols are demons. Idols are more than just carved images. False religions are more than just fake systems of belief. They are demon empowered from their very core. Good people believe in false gods, hard working people, honest people, but it does not change the fact that they belong to Satan.

In fact, if you go to the Old Testament, the Book of Leviticus it says, “Any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice ⁹ and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from his people.” (Leviticus 17:8-9) Christ is our tabernacle and He calls us to live holy or separate from the fallen world systems of false belief because if one does not, as it is written in Leviticus “that man shall be cut off from his people.” My beloved, do you understand when you take the holy communion of Christ you verify that you have accepted Him as the true sacrifice, the only sacrifice acceptable to God for your sins. That you belong to Him and you are to live holy lives not of this world system!

In Deuteronomy, God our Rock helps clarify verse 1 of 1st Timothy 4 that says, those “devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1) are in truth sacrificing “to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.
¹⁸ You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave

you birth.” (Deuteronomy 32:17-18)

In 1st Corinthians 10, Paul says those who come to the table of the Lord and then go worship at some pagan religious shrine, cannot serve the table of the Lord and the table of demons. One cannot serve two masters. False religious systems and all idols are simply focal points for demon activity, for lying seducing spirits purveying the doctrines of hell.

Scripture clearly tells us, whether we are looking at the history of Israel or whether you're dealing with the new church of Christ or the history of the church through the centuries that there has always been a battleground between God and His truth and the devil and his lies. That battleground is clearly drawn in Scripture and the fight goes on constantly. **God calls to people through truth and Satan calls through his**

demons and lies, luring people away from truth. The battle will continue until

Christ returns and casts the devil into the lake of fire. **“The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ...**

15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:10 & 15) We know God wins, Christ wins, but until then we are soldiers in the army of God, of truth fighting the devil who is the deceiver.

These activities, these false teachings were going on in Ephesus when Timothy was there. The presence of false teachers has already written about, back in chapter 1, do you remember verses 3 to 7 where Paul discusses the fact that there were some teaching other doctrines, fables, endless genealogies, they were dealing with questions that did not edify who God is? They thought they were teachers and desired to be teachers of the law in order to be recognized by men, but they did not understand anything that they were saying for they knew not God. Verses 18 to 20

tell us they were apostate; they had made a shipwreck of the faith. They had departed from the truth and they should be delivered to Satan so to learn not to blaspheme God.

At the very outset of this epistle, Paul introduces the false teachers. Then after dealing in chapters 2 and 3 with some of the ramifications of their false teaching and the order of the church as related to men and women and then church leaders, Paul now returns to the matter of the false teachers themselves here in chapter 4. He dealt with their teaching and its implications in chapters 2 and 3, Paul called for the proper kind of leadership, proper kind of roles in the church and now comes back to dealing with this issue of false teachers. This is why you as the congregation have an important job of holding leadership, holding me, accountable to the Scripture.

My beloved, I need to remind you and myself again that this matter of false teaching is replete in Scripture and there is ever and always a call for the church to deal with it. This is not a popular teaching in our society today. **Our society teaches tolerance at all costs, is accepting of every perversion, and is only intolerant of truth.** When you come out strongly and confrontationally against false teaching, you are very often criticized and libeled. I know because it has happened to me. Nonetheless, there is biblical mandate and there is at stake the eternal salvation for the souls of men, we must deal with false teaching as false. The battle lines were drawn in Israel, they were drawn in the early church and these battle lines must be drawn today! We, my brothers and sisters, like Timothy must be warned and instructed as to how to understand what is behind false teaching. It is demonic activity. The Scripture makes this clear for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Moses lead the people out of Egypt by being obedient to God and after 40 years he looked out and knew some of the people did not believe, even after witnessing miracles and wonders. He said to them, **“to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.”** (Deuteronomy 29:4) Without a heart for

God and Christ all else will fail.

Heart Ready For Battle

In chapter 4 Paul launches into a discussion of the demonic forces that comes against the truth. Paul is still dealing with Timothy's role in the church, with the errors Timothy is facing and how they must be set right. The first five verses of chapter 4, he presents this apostasy and then from verses 6 to 16 tells Timothy how to be the kind of man necessary to deal with it, how to have the strength to counterattack the attacks of Satan.

Now as I said, the theme of the verse is this little phrase "[some shall depart from the faith.](#)" Some, not all, but some, like Judas, like Demas, like the disciples of John 6 who walk no more with Christ, there will be some, he says, who will depart. Paul uses the verb *aphistēmi* ([af-is'-tay-mee](#)) from which comes the word "apostate." It means to depart from, to remove yourself from a former place, to remove yourself from the position you originally occupied to another place. That is a purposeful intentional deliberate departure from a former position. It is not talking about an unintentional fall and it is not talking about somebody struggling with doubt. It is someone who deliberately dispossesses himself of truth once affirmed to depart for another teaching, abandoning a once affirmed faith. The term "the faith" means Christian doctrine. Some will depart from true faith, Jude 3 says, "[I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.](#)" [Defectors understand and outwardly affirm the faith, and reflect such affirmation, but have not a believing heart for God, and being under demonic seduction, depart from the faith.](#) Paul says, "Timothy, you must expect that, some will do it and you must know how to deal with it."

In Paul's instruction to us on this matter of apostasy, there are five features behind the scenes as we look at apostates. Paul gives us these. They are very basic and

they are very helpful to us.

Number one, is the apostate's predictability? We should not be shocked. We should not be surprised. We should be ready to recognize apostasy for it is predictable. This is the result of spiritual conflict and the Spirit of God has said it would happen. It is absolutely predictable for Paul wrote this in the present tense. Look at the person, look into their heart and see what is important to them and time will reveal who they are or are not in Christ.

This is not anything new, the Holy Spirit has been saying this since the Spirit began giving Scripture in the Old Testament. There are many verses in the Old Testament about apostasy. There are warnings in the Old Testament about people who would depart from the faith. Verses about not all Israel being true Israel, not all Jews being genuine believing Jews, some of them having uncircumcised hearts, though they had circumcised themselves on the outside. The Spirit through all of the centuries of redemptive history has said there would be those who departed from the faith. There would be rebels within the camp of Israel. The prophets spoke of it, Daniel spoke of it, Ezekiel spoke of it, Christ spoke of it and His apostles wrote of it - it is not an uncommon subject. The Spirit has spoken truth, not predictions, throughout the ages.

In fact, as we travel into the New Testament and we see how many have departed from the faith and how the Lord warned that they would do that. In Matthew 24 Christ said, **“Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.”** (Matthew 24:11-12) Mark wrote, **“For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. ²³ But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.”** (Mark 13:22-23)

The Scriptures indicate to us in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 that before the coming of

Christ in glory there would be a massive departure from the faith. In 2 Peter there will come in the last times mockers and scoffers abandoning the faith and Jude 18 we find the same thing. First John chapter 2, the Antichrist will come, as a result there will be people who will go out from us, it will reveal they never were of us, but they will depart from the faith. In 1st John again, in chapter 4, there is a very straightforward mention that there are false prophets who are going out into the world and they will continue going out into the world and they will lure souls away to their own purpose.

The Spirit has expressly, explicitly said this time and time again. The present tense of Paul's writing means the Spirit is continually speaking, He is speaking now, He is saying this right now and it is part of the continuation of that Holy Spirit revelation. I need to add as a footnote that all biblical revelation comes from the Holy Spirit. Holy men of God spoke and wrote as the Holy Spirit moved them. That's how Scripture was written, 2 Peter 1:21 says, "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit has spoken. He is now speaking through this verse right here as Paul pens it and it is the very word of the Holy Spirit. The stream of Holy Spirit revelation about apostasy is flowing from the Spirit of God to Paul and from Paul to us at this very moment. So it is predictable.

Secondly, in understanding the apostates, we have to look at their chronology. When will these things happen? He says in verse 1, "in later times." When is this? Is this a long time in the future? When is the "latter times?" Well, we need only to reflect on the Scripture to answer that question. In 1st Peter the apostle is speaking of Christ and he says, "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you²¹ who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." (1 Peter 1:20-21) The writer of Hebrews wrote, "... for

then he *Christ* would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all **at the end of the ages** to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26)

I have run out of time. I am not going to get to number three, the source of apostates. You will have to trust me or study for yourself that they belong to the devil. I also will not get to the fourth; we must recognize the source of the false teachings, their source is supernatural, but the teaching, but the teaching, comes to people through natural men. The false teaching comes through men who are hypocrites. They promote that they are one thing while teaching something different from the truth, the Bible, they teach for their own gain and the advancement of the evil one.

The fifth says that they seem to be able to do what they do without any compunction. That is to say they can carry on this hypocrisy day after day, month after month and year after year because their conscience has been burned. Which means their sensitivity to right and wrong, their sensitivity to truth and integrity. It has been scarred beyond function.

Heart Seeking God

This section of scriptures ends with **“For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.”** (1 Timothy 4:4-5) Why does God create everything good? Because they were made for His glory, but the only people who fulfill that purpose are the people who know Him because it is only believers who give Him glory for it. We are the ones who thank God for our marriage. We are the ones that thank God for our food. We are the ones that show Christ our gratitude.

Therefore, in the truest and purest and highest sense, everything God ever made He

made for those who believe and know the truth. Is not that a wonderful statement? The world, yes, they share in our blessings, the rain falls on the just and what? The unjust. They benefit from marriage. They benefit from food. But they never were the reason God gave it because the reason He gave it was His own glory and only believers give that back to Him. So every good thing God made. He made for us. Yes, this includes beacon.

These are grave issues raised by Paul concerning the hypocrite and the apostate. We need to be aware and prepared to deal with these issues. But God tells us in verses 4 and 5 He made all good things for His children, for true believers in Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Having become a believer and having given your life to Jesus Christ, take God's good gifts with thanksgiving and praise Him for all of them. Enjoy the bliss of marriage and the fulfillment of the physical. Enjoy the wonder of all the food that God has provided in the bounty of His incredibly vast mind. Enjoy it all and thank Him and praise Him that in Christ you are free from any necessary effort to attain what has already been given you in His grace.

If you are depending on something other than Jesus Christ for your salvation, you are seduced by demon spirits to believe a lie. If you have not trusted in Christ as your Savior, I plead with you, open your heart to Christ. One cannot find Christ with the mind only; it takes the heart also. He is your only hope, eternal hope. Love and live and praise Christ with your life! Through Christ know truth and know His blessings and know His peace. Come to Christ; come to me after we close so I can pray with you a prayer that will change everything in your life forever through Christ.