

Preaching the Gospel #1068

Be Careful What You Hear

>> BE CAREFUL LITTLE EYES WHAT YOU SEE, BE CAREFUL LITTLE EARS, WHAT YOU HEAR, BE CAREFUL LITTLE MOUTH WHAT YOU SAY, FOR THERE IS A FATHER UP ABOVE AND HE'S LOOKING DOWN IN LOVE; SO BE CAREFUL LITTLE EYES, LITTLE EARS, AND LITTLE MOUTH. HI. MY NAME IS CLIFF GOODWIN, AND AS WE HAVE BEGUN THIS BROADCAST TODAY, YOU MIGHT RECOGNIZE THAT AS THE FAMILIAR SENTIMENTS OF A VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SONG OR MAYBE A SUNDAY SCHOOL SONG, IF YOU WILL. I'M GLAD THAT YOU'VE JOINED ME TODAY. WE'RE GOING TO TAKE THE ELEMENTS, AT LEAST ONE ELEMENT OUT OF THAT SONG AND USE IT AS THE BASIS OF OUR STUDY TODAY HERE ON PREACHING THE GOSPEL. I'VE ENTITLED OUR STUDY SIMPLY, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU HEAR. I WANT US TO EMPHASIZE TODAY THAT ASPECT OR THAT VERSE, IF YOU WILL, IN THE FAMILIAR SONG. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU HEAR. NOW, THE REASON WE'RE CONSIDERING THIS AND REALLY THE REASON THERE IS NEED TO CONSIDER SUCH A LESSON AS THIS IS BECAUSE YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I THAT OUR CURRENT WORLD IS FILLED WITH ALL KINDS OF TEACHINGS, ALL KINDS OF DOCTRINES. WHETHER THEY BE OF A PHILOSOPHICAL NATURE OR A SPIRITUAL NATURE OR A RELIGIOUS NATURE, THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF TEACHINGS AND DOGMAS AND THINGS OUT THERE THAT PEOPLE COME IN CONTACT WITH, AND THOSE TEACHINGS CAN INVARIABLY INFLUENCE OUR WAY OF THINKING. THEY CAN EVEN HELP TO SHAPE AND MOLD OUR WORLD VIEW, IF YOU WILL. AND SO SIMPLY PUT, YES, YOU AND I AND ALL OF US AS HUMAN BEINGS, WE REALLY DO NEED TO BE CAREFUL WHAT WE HEAR. NOW, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, AS HE WENT ABOUT IN HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY, HE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE HEARD AND HOW THEY REACTED TO WHAT THEY HEARD. FOR EXAMPLE, IN MARK 4:24 WE READ, AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, TAKE HEED WHAT YOU HEAR; WITH WHAT MEASURE YOU METE IT SHALL BE MEASURED TO YOU; AND UNTO YOU THAT HEAR SHALL MORE BE GIVEN. MANY TIMES WE HAVE USED MARK 4:24 PERHAPS TO SAY THAT WE NEED TO TAKE HEED WHAT WE HEAR IN THE SENSE OF BEING CAREFUL WHAT WE LISTEN TO, BEING CAREFUL WHAT WE GIVE HEED AND THINGS OF THAT NATURE. THAT'S BASICALLY THE GIST OF OUR SERMON TODAY; BUT I'M NOT SURE THAT'S EXACTLY THE POINT JESUS WAS MAKING THERE IN MARK 4:24. THE WAY THE REST OF THAT VERSE READS, IT APPEARS MORE LIKELY THAT JESUS WAS SAYING WHAT YE HEAR FROM ME AS YOUR TEACHER, AS YOUR RABBI, IN THE SENSE OF THAT DAY, JESUS SAYS TAKE HEED. TAKE HEED WHAT YOU HEAR, FROM ME SPECIFICALLY, JESUS WOULD HAVE MEANT, PROBABLY. AND IN THAT WAY HE SAYS, IF YOU TAKE HEED WHAT I TEACH YOU, MORE SHALL BE GIVEN. YOU'LL LEARN MORE, YOU'LL BUILD A FOUNDATION, AND THEN UPON THAT FOUNDATION YOU'LL BUILD MORE AND MORE UNDERSTANDING. TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR. BUT THEN IN LUKE'S ACCOUNT, LOOK WITH ME TO LUKE 8:18. JESUS STATED IT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY HERE IN LUKE'S ACCOUNT. HE SAID, TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR; FOR WHOSOEVER HATH, TO HIM SHALL BE GIVEN, AND WHOSOEVER HATH NOT, FROM HIM SHALL BE TAKEN EVEN THAT WHICH HE SEEMETH TO HAVE. AND SO HERE WE ARE CAUTIONED OR ADMONISHED TO TAKE HEED HOW WE HEAR, PROBABLY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF WHEN YOU HEAR THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS, WHEN YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH HIS INSTRUCTION, YOU NEED TO TAKE HEED HOW YOU

REACT TO THOSE THINGS. ARE YOU LISTENING CARELESSLY? ARE YOU LISTENING AS THOUGH THESE ARE IDLE WORDS? OR ARE YOU LISTENING CAREFULLY AND ARE YOU LISTENING IN VIEW OF ETERNITY? JESUS SAID, TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR. AND SO THESE ARE JUST TWO EXAMPLES, ONE FROM MARK 4, THE OTHER FROM LUKE 8, IN WHICH WE SEE THAT OUR LORD TAUGHT CONCERNING HEARING, WHAT PEOPLE HEAR AND THE INSTRUCTION TO WHICH THEY ARE EXPOSED. AND SO WE KNOW THAT THIS WAS IMPORTANT TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND AS WE'RE GOING TO SEE NOW IN THE BALANCE OF OUR STUDY TOGETHER, WE'RE GOING TO SEE THAT IT SHOULD BE IMPORTANT TO US AS WELL IN THIS DAY AND TIME. AND SO BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU HEAR. I'VE DIVIDED THIS LESSON INTO THREE MAJOR PARTS. NUMBER ONE, SIMPLY THE ADMONITION DON'T DRINK IN POISON. DON'T DRINK IN POISON. NUMBER TWO THEN, WE'LL CONSIDER THE PORTION THAT SAYS. LET'S LOOK AT SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE TEACHERS. FALSE TEACHERS ARE A REALITY IN THE WORLD, AND WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THEM ACCORDING TO THEIR CHARACTERISTICS. AND THEN NUMBER THREE, LORD WILLING, WE'LL WRAP UP THIS PERIOD OF STUDY TOGETHER BY LOOKING AT A CASE STUDY FROM THE BOOK OF HEBREWS, ONE THAT I FEEL IS VERY APPLICABLE AND VERY TIMELY FOR US IN THIS DAY AND AGE. AND SO THAT BEING SAID, LET'S CONSIDER POINT NUMBER ONE, DON'T DRINK IN POISON. YOU KNOW, IF SOMETHING IS IDENTIFIED AS A POISONOUS SUBSTANCE, THEN WE AS LOVING PARENTS OR AS CARING GUARDIANS OF A YOUNGER PERSON, A YOUNGER CHILD, WE WOULD NOT TELL THAT CHILD, WELL, JUST GIVE IT A TRY. YOU WILL TRY IT ONE TIME, AND YOU WON'T LIKE IT, AND THAT WILL FIX THAT PROBLEM GOING FORWARD. WE WOULDN'T SAY THAT, BECAUSE WE RECOGNIZE THE SUBSTANCE AS POISONOUS AND THEREFORE HARMFUL, AND SO WE DON'T WANT THEM TO TRY IT EVEN THAT FIRST TIME. WE WANT THEM TO BE SAFE AND TO BE WELL. WELL, MUCH THE SAME IS TRUE WHEN IT COMES TO SPIRITUAL DOCTRINES AND TEACHINGS OR PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS AND PERSPECTIVES. WE DON'T WANT TO DRINK IN POISON. WHEN WE KNOW THAT SOMETHING IS CONTRARY TO THE BIBLE, CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD, WE OUGHT TO STAY AWAY FROM IT. DON'T DRINK IN THAT POISON. LET ME GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS IS BROUGHT FORTH IN SCRIPTURE. IF I WERE TO QUOTE 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:33, MANY OF YOU IN OUR AUDIENCE, YOU WOULD RECOGNIZE IT IMMEDIATELY: BE NOT DECEIVED; EVIL COMPANIONSHIPS CORRUPT GOOD MORALS. AND WE KNOW THE VALIDITY OF THAT STATEMENT. THAT PRINCIPLE IS TAUGHT THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE; AND THEN EVEN BY EXPERIENCE IN LIFE, MANY OF US HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO OBSERVE THAT SURE ENOUGH, JUST LIKE GOD SAID ALL ALONG, WHEN PEOPLE FORM EVIL COMPANIONSHIPS AND EVIL ASSOCIATIONS, THEY WIND UP BEING BROUGHT DOWN SPIRITUALLY BY THOSE RELATIONSHIPS. AND SO YOU RECOGNIZE 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:33. BUT DID YOU KNOW THIS? IN THE CONTEXT OF 1ST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 15, SPECIFICALLY IN THAT CONTEXT, THE ONES ABOUT WHOM PAUL WAS WRITING, THEY WERE FALSE TEACHERS. HE WAS URGING THE CORINTHIANS NOT TO FORM THESE COMPANIONSHIPS AND NOT TO MAINTAIN THESE ASSOCIATIONS WITH FALSE TEACHERS WHO WERE DENYING THE RESURRECTION. AND I WANT TO PROVE THAT TO YOU FROM THE CONTEXT. BACK UP WITH ME TO 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:12. NOTICE WHAT WE READ. NOW IF CHRIST BE PREACHED, THAT HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, HOW SAY SOME AMONG YOU - CIRCLE THAT WORD SAY. HOW SAY SOME AMONG YOU THAT THERE IS NO RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD? AND SO IN VERSE 12, HE INTRODUCES THE PROBLEM GROUP. HE INTRODUCES THE EVIL COMPANIONSHIPS THAT HE'S GOING TO DEAL WITH DOWN IN VERSE 33: NAMELY, FALSE TEACHERS WHO WERE DENYING THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. NOW, DON'T GET ME WRONG. VERSE 33 IS APPLICABLE IN A VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN A VARIETY OF SCENARIOS. EVERY TIME, EVIL

COMPANIONSHIPS, THEY CORRUPT GOOD MORALS. THAT'S TRUE EVERY TIME. BUT IN THIS CONTEXT, LET US APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT PAUL WANTED THE CORINTHIANS TO BE CAREFUL WHAT THEY HEARD, TO BE CAREFUL OF THE TEACHING THAT THEY EXPOSED THEMSELVES TO. VERSE 12, THERE WERE THOSE WHO WERE SAYING THINGS THAT WERE CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD. NOW GO WITH ME TO THE BOOK OF 2ND TIMOTHY FOR YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS. DON'T DRINK IN POISON. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU HEAR. LOOK AT SECOND TIMOTHY 2:16. BUT SHUN - THAT WORD MEANS TO REJECT, TO ABSTAIN, TO STAY AWAY FROM. SHUN PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS; FOR THEY WILL INCREASE UNTO MORE UNGODLINESS. AND THEIR WORD, THE WORDS OF THESE FALSE TEACHERS, WILL EAT AS DOOTH A CANKER - SOME TRANSLATIONS HAVE GANGRENE, OTHER PEOPLE THINK CANCER - OF WHOM IS HYMENAEUS AND PHILETUS. HE EVEN NAMES TWO OF THESE FALSE TEACHERS. WHO CONCERNING THE TRUTH HAVE ERRED, SAYING - NOTICE, YOU CAN CIRCLE THAT WORD AGAIN. SAYING THAT THE RESURRECTION IS PAST ALREADY, AND THEY OVERTHROW THE FAITH OF SOME. SO ONCE AGAIN, WE'RE FINDING IN SCRIPTURE BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU HEAR, AND DON'T DRINK IN POISON. WHEN WE EXPOSE OURSELVES TO SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS AND DOCTRINES THAT ARE CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD, OUR MIND IS DRINKING IN POISON. NOW, PERHAPS YOU'LL REJECT IT, PERHAPS YOU'LL STAY AWAY FROM IT OR YOU'LL SAY NO TO IT; BUT IT IS STILL EXPOSING YOUR MIND AND YOUR THOUGHT PROCESSES TO A HARMFUL SUBSTANCE. AND SO HERE IN THIS CASE, 2ND TIMOTHY 2, PAUL TOLD TIMOTHY TO TEACH FOR HIMSELF, OBVIOUSLY, AND NO DOUBT TO TEACH OTHERS THAT WE NEED TO SHUN THESE KINDS OF SAYINGS. STAY AWAY FROM THIS KIND OF PEOPLE AND SHUN THEIR SAYINGS, THEIR TEACHINGS, THEIR DOCTRINES THAT ARE OBVIOUSLY CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD. NOW, IT'S INTERESTING THAT HE MENTIONED HYMENAEUS THERE IN VERSE 17. IF YOU WERE TO BACK UP TO THE BOOK OF 1ST TIMOTHY, NOTICE WHAT YOU FIND IN 1ST TIMOTHY 1:19-20. HE TOLD TIMOTHY BACK THEN, HOLDING FAITH AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE, WHICH SOME, HAVING PUT AWAY CONCERNING FAITH HAVE MADE SHIPWRECK. THEY'VE MADE SHIPWRECK OF THEIR FAITH. OF WHOM IS, AND HERE HE IS AGAIN, HYMENAEUS AND ALEXANDER, WHOM I HAVE DELIVERED UNTO SATAN, THAT THEY MAY LEARN NOT TO BLASPHEME. THE WORD BLASPHEME IS AGAIN A WORD WHICH INVOLVES THE SPEECH, WHAT SOMEONE SAYS, WHAT SOMEONE SPEAKS. AND SO HERE HYMENAEUS IS JOINED WITH ALEXANDER THIS TIME. WE DON'T KNOW IF ALEXANDER AND PHILETUS PERHAPS ARE TWO NAMES FOR THE SAME INDIVIDUAL. WE'RE NOT SURE OF THAT. BUT HE'S JOINED WITH ALEXANDER, AND BOTH OF THESE MEN HAD BEEN SAYING THINGS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE SAYING, PERHAPS TEACHING THINGS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TEACHING. AND SO PAUL HAD TO LEAD GOD'S PEOPLE IN WITHDRAWING THEIR FELLOWSHIP FROM THEM. I BELIEVE THAT STATEMENT THERE IN VERSE 20, WHOM I HAVE DELIVERED UNTO SATAN, I BELIEVE THAT'S A TECHNICAL EXPRESSION. WE FIND IT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 5, AND THERE IT MEANS SIMPLY TO WITHDRAW THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH FROM THE OFFENDER OR FROM THE DELINQUENT, IF YOU WILL. AND SO WE'RE LEARNING OVER AND OVER THE CHURCHES BEING INSTRUCTED, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU HEAR. DON'T JUST ENTERTAIN ANYTHING AND ANY DOCTRINE THAT COMES DOWN THE PIKE. BE SELECTIVE. DON'T DRINK IN POISON. NOW, WE COULD EVEN BACK UP TO THE BOOK OF PROVERBS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND WE CAN FIND THIS PRINCIPLE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN PROVERBS 14:7, THE WISE MAN WROTE, GO. GO FROM THE PRESENCE OF A FOOLISH MAN WHEN THOU PERCEIVEST NOT IN HIM THE LIPS OF KNOWLEDGE. IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN YOU RECOGNIZE A MAN IS NOT SPEAKING WISELY, HE'S NOT SPEAKING TRUE KNOWLEDGE, HE'S NOT SPEAKING TRUTH ITSELF, THE WISE MAN SAYS, YOU NEED TO LEAVE. YOU NEED TO GO FROM HIS PRESENCE. DON'T HANG AROUND AND EXPOSE YOUR HEART AND

YOUR MIND TO HIS FOOLISHNESS AND TO HIS ERROR. THAT WOULD BE LIKE DRINKING IN SPIRITUAL POISON. WE'LL WRAP UP THIS FIRST POINT IN ROMANS, ROMANS 16. NOTICE WITH ME VERSES 17 AND 18: NOW I YOU, BRETHREN, MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED AND AVOID THEM. NOTICE THAT THE MARKING, THE TAKING NOTE OF THESE FALSE TEACHERS IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF AVOIDING THEM. I HAVE MARKED YOU IN MY MIND, I'VE IDENTIFIED WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU'RE TEACHING; AND I'VE DONE THAT NOT TO DRAW CLOSER TO YOU, NOT TO BRING YOU CLOSER TO ME IN FELLOWSHIP. I'VE DONE THAT SO THAT I CAN AVOID YOU. THAT'S WHAT PAUL TELLS US TO DO IN VERSE 17. IN VERSE 18, HE CONTINUED, FOR THEY THAT ARE SUCH SERVE NOT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BUT THEIR OWN BELLY. AND BY GOOD WORDS AND FAIR SPEECHES, THEY DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE. YOU KNOW, FALSE TEACHERS ARE A REALITY. NOW, THAT'S A SAD REALITY, BUT A REALITY NONETHELESS. AND THERE PAUL TELLS US, HE INSTRUCTS US, DON'T DRINK IN THEIR POISON. YOU MARK THEM. WHEN YOU REALIZE WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY'RE DOING, YOU MARK THEM, YOU TAKE NOTE OF THEM, AND YOU DO SO IN ORDER THAT YOU CAN AVOID THEM. YOU STAY AWAY FROM THEM. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU HEAR, OR, DON'T DRINK IN POISON. NOW, THAT'S THE FIRST SEGMENT OF OUR STUDY HERE TODAY. LET'S MOVE NOW SECONDLY, AND LET'S TALK ABOUT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE TEACHERS. OBVIOUSLY, THESE VERSES WE'VE NOTICED AND MANY, MANY OTHERS IN THE BIBLE TEACH US THAT THERE ARE FALSE TEACHERS, THERE IS SUCH A THING AS FALSE DOCTRINE; AND SO IT SHOULD BEHOVEE US THEN TO BE ABLE TO READILY IDENTIFY SOME OF THOSE CHARACTERISTICS SO THAT WE CAN AVOID THEM. ROMANS 16:17, WE WANT TO MARK THEM AND AVOID THEM AND TO NOT EXPOSE OUR HEARTS AND OUR MINDS TO THEIR NOXIOUS OR POISONOUS TEACHINGS. AND SO CHARACTERISTIC NUMBER ONE, SADLY, I HAVE TO POINT OUT THAT FALSE TEACHERS CAN EVEN COME FROM AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE. AND I'M SPEAKING OF THE LORD'S CHURCH, HIS BODY. I'M TALKING ABOUT GOD'S PEOPLE ON EARTH TODAY. FALSE TEACHERS CAN RISE UP FROM OUR OWN VERY MIDST. AND HOW SAD THAT IS, BUT IT'S TRUE. LOOK WITH ME TO ACTS 20:29. WE READ THERE AS PAUL WAS SPEAKING TO THE ELDERS FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ANCIENT EPHESUS, HE SAID, FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY DEPARTING SHALL GRIEVOUS WOLVES ENTER IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK. NOW THERE IN VERSE 29, THAT WORDING SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT FALSE TEACHERS WOULD COME FROM THE OUTSIDE, THAT THEY WOULD COME IN THE CHURCH AS IT WERE AND AFFECT THE CHURCH FROM THE OUTSIDE IN. AND SO THERE ARE FALSE TEACHERS, CERTAINLY AN ABUNDANCE OF FALSE TEACHERS OUTSIDE OF THE LORD'S CHURCH, MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE NEVER OBEYED THE GOSPEL, NEVER BEEN MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND YET THEY'RE TEACHING FALSEHOODS. AND WE KNOW THAT TO BE TRUE. BUT THEN THE NEXT VERSE, VERSE 30, READS AS FOLLOWS: ALSO OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM. NOW THE THREAT IS NOT ONLY FROM THE OUTSIDE WITH DENOMINATIONAL TEACHERS AND WITH FALSE TEACHERS OF VARIOUS STRIPES, BUT THERE CAN BE A THREAT ARISE FROM THE INSIDE. AND AS PAUL WAS TALKING TO THESE ELDERS, IT APPEARS THAT HE IS FOREWARNING THAT PERHAPS EVEN OUT OF THEIR ELDERSHIP, OUT OF THE RULERS, THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS THEMSELVES, THAT MEN WOULD ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS IN ORDER TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM. THAT'S SCARY. THAT'S VERY SOBERING TO THINK ABOUT. AND SO PAUL SAID IN VERSE 31, THEREFORE, WATCH; BE DILIGENT AND REMEMBER THAT BY THE SPACE OF THREE YEARS, I CEASED NOT TO WARN EVERYONE NIGHT AND DAY, WITH TEARS. THIS BROKE PAUL'S HEART. HE WAS SADDENED TO KNOW THAT THE TIME WAS

COMING WHEN THE BRETHREN AT EPHESUS PARTICULARLY WOULD BE IMPACTED BY WOLVES FROM WITHOUT, BUT THEY WOULD ALSO BE MISLED BY MEN FROM WITHIN. AND SO CHARACTERISTIC NUMBER ONE OF FALSE TEACHERS CAN BE THIS: THEY CAN ARISE FROM OUR OWN NUMBER, YES, AND EVEN FROM AMONG OUR OWN RESPECTED LEADERS, YES. AND HOW SAD THAT IS. NOW CHARACTERISTIC NUMBER TWO: THEY CAN BE VERY CUNNING, VERY SUBTLE, AND VERY DECEPTIVE IN THEIR APPROACH. FALSE TEACHERS CAN BE VERY DECEPTIVE IN THEIR APPROACH. AND REALLY, THIS IS THEIR CLOAK, THIS IS THEIR COVERING WHEREBY THEY ARE ABLE TO ESPOUSE THEIR ERROR, SPREAD THEIR FALSE DOCTRINE WITHOUT DETECTION, AT LEAST FOR A WHILE UNTIL THEY'RE ABLE TO GET THOSE NOXIOUS SEEDS PLANTED; AND THEN THE DAMAGE, OFTEN THE DAMAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE. WE LOOK TOGETHER TO 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:13, WHERE PAUL WROTE, FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO MARVEL, PAUL SAYS, DON'T LET THIS BLOW YOUR MIND, SO TO SPEAK, DON'T FIND THIS INCREDIBLE. HE SAYS, THERE'S NO MARVEL. SATAN HIMSELF IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. IN OTHER WORDS, THE MASTER WHOM THESE FALSE TEACHERS SERVE, IF HE IS A MASTER OF DECEPTION, IF HE USES GUILF AND DISHONESTY AND DECEPTION AS HIS CRAFT, THEN DON'T MARVEL WHEN WE SEE HIS SERVANTS, FALSE TEACHERS, DOING THE SAME. VERSE 15, THEREFORE, IT IS NO GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS, IF HIS SERVANTS, ALSO BE TRANSFORMED AS THE MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. AND THEN PAUL ADDS, WHOSE END SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS. IN OTHER WORDS, GOD KNOWS WHO THEY ARE, AND GOD WILL RECOMPENSE, AND GOD WILL REQUITE THEM ACCORDINGLY. BUT THE DANGER IS FOR US, THAT THE VIGILANCE MUST BE OURS, RECOGNIZING THAT JUST BECAUSE A MAN APPEARS TO BE A GOOD PERSON AND HE APPEARS TO BE TEACHING GOOD THINGS, WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL. FALSE TEACHERS ARE NOTORIOUSLY CUNNING, CRAFTY, DECEPTIVE; AND THUS WE NEED TO BEWARE. AND JESUS HIMSELF, HE TAUGHT THIS SAME PRINCIPLE IN MATTHEW 7, THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, WHEN HE SAID THERE IN VERSE 15, BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS WHICH COME TO YOU IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING. OUTWARDLY, THEY APPEAR TO BE SHEEP, JUST LIKE YOU AND JUST LIKE I. THEY APPEAR TO BE JUST LIKE WE ARE. BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENING WOLVES. AGAIN, IF A FALSE TEACHER HUNG A SIGN AROUND HIS NECK, FLASHING SIGN THAT SAID FALSE TEACHER, FALSE TEACHER, WELL, HE WOULD NOT MEET WITH VERY MUCH SUCCESS. HE FIRST MUST BE ABLE TO GET HIS FOOT IN THE DOOR, AS WE COMMONLY SAY. HE'S GOT TO BE ABLE TO BUILD A RAPPORT WITH HIS HEARERS. AND THAT NECESSITATES A LEVEL OF DECEPTION. IT NECESSITATES A LEVEL OF CONCEALMENT, NOT IMMEDIATELY REVEALING HIS INTENTIONS OR HIS BELIEFS, NOT IMMEDIATELY. HE'S GOT TO GET A FOOT IN THE DOOR AND BUILD A RAPPORT WITH THE PEOPLE. AND AS HE DECEIVES THE PEOPLE, THEY BECOME MORE AND MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO FOLLOWING WHAT HE SAYS REGARDLESS. CHARACTERISTIC NUMBER TWO, FALSE TEACHERS CAN BE VERY CUNNING AND VERY DECEPTIVE. BUT FALSE TEACHERS CHARACTERISTIC NUMBER THREE, I SUPPOSE, IS THIS: THEIR ERROR CAN SOUND PERSUASIVE. IT CAN SOUND REASONABLE. NOW, THIS IS A REMARKABLE STATEMENT. I THINK MAYBE WE DON'T PONDER THIS STATEMENT OFTEN ENOUGH AS WE SHOULD. LOOK WITH ME TO THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS, A BOOK WHICH WAS WRITTEN TO COMBAT ERROR AND HERESY, AND NOTICE WHAT PAUL SAID IN COLOSSIANS 2:4. HE SAID, AND THIS I SAY, LEST ANYONE SHOULD BEGUILF YOU WITH ENTICING WORDS. THE OLD KING JAMES VERSION FROM WHICH I'M READING, IT SAYS, ENTICING WORDS. BUT YOU CONSULT A VARIETY OF OTHER VERSIONS OR TRANSLATIONS OR EVEN PARAPHRASES FOR THE SAKE OF CONTRAST AND COMPARISON, AND YOU'LL FIND THINGS LIKE THIS: LEST THEY SHOULD LEAD YOU ASTRAY WITH

PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS, LEST THEY READ YOU LEAD YOU ASTRAY WITH PLAUSIBLE ARGUMENTS. ENTICING WORDS, WORDS THAT ARE PLAUSIBLE. SEE, ALL A FALSE TEACHER NEEDS TO DO SOMETIMES IS TO GET A PERSON TO THINK, HEY, THAT SOUNDS RIGHT. HEY, I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE. AND THEN THE DOOR IS CRACKED AJAR, AND HE'S ABLE THEN TO PUSH HIS POINT EVEN FURTHER. PAUL SAYS, LOOK, JUST BECAUSE AN ARGUMENT IS PLAUSIBLE DOESN'T MEAN IT'S TRUE. AND JUST BECAUSE AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE PERSUASIVELY DOESN'T MEAN IT'S ACCURATE. BEWARE OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS AND BE CAREFUL. I HAVEN'T LEFT AS MUCH TIME AT ALL FOR A BRIEF CASE STUDY FROM THE BOOK OF HEBREWS, BUT WHAT I WANT TO DO IS I WANT TO REFER YOU TO HEBREWS CHAPTER 12. WE'LL JUST GO THERE FOR THE SAKE OF TIME. IN HEBREWS 12, READ WITH ME BEGINNING AT VERSE 12. THE WRITER SAID, WHEREFORE LIFT UP THE HANDS WHICH HANG DOWN AND THE FEEBLE KNEES AND MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET, LEST THAT WHICH IS LAME BE TURNED OUT OF THE WAY; BUT RATHER LET IT BE HEALED. NOW, IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS, YOU KNOW THAT IT WAS WRITTEN TO CHRISTIANS WHO WERE BEING EXPOSED TO ERROR: NAMELY, JUDAISTIC ERROR, PULLING THEM OR DESIRING TO PULL THEM BACK FROM CHRISTIANITY BACK TO JUDAISM AND THE OLD LAW OF MOSES. WELL, HERE THE WRITER SAYS, LOOK, YOU NEED TO STRENGTHEN AND BRACE UP WHAT IS WEAK, YOU NEED TO MAKE STRAIGHT YOUR PATHS SO THAT PEOPLE DON'T GET TURNED OUT OF THE WAY. AND ALL OF THAT IS DESCRIPTIVE OF MAKING SURE THAT YOUR THINKING AND YOUR ATTITUDE IS CORRECT; BUT IT ALSO INVOLVES DOING AWAY WITH ANY KIND OF TEACHING THAT WOULD TURN YOU ASIDE.

>> (SINGING)