

3 DANGERS FACING THE CHURCH & HOW WE GUARD AGAINST THEM

1. The Danger of False or Incomplete Teaching

*“He asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you came to believe?” They replied, “We’ve not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Then he said, “What baptism did you receive, then?” They answered, “John’s baptism.” Paul explained, “John baptized with a baptism by which people showed they were changing their hearts and lives. It was a baptism that told people about the one who was coming after him. This is the one in whom they were to believe. This one is Jesus.” After they listened to Paul, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” **Acts 19:2-5 CEB***

To Combat This Danger We Must Teach Confidently & Consistently...

*“Paul went to the synagogue and spoke confidently for the next three months. He interacted with those present and offered convincing arguments concerning the nature of God’s kingdom. Some people had closed their minds, though. They refused to believe and publicly slandered the Way. As a result, Paul left them, took the disciples with him, and continued his daily interactions in Tyrannus’ lecture hall.” **Acts 19:8-9 CEB***

2. The Danger of a Hostile World

*“At that time a great disturbance erupted about the Way. There was a silversmith named Demetrius. He made silver models of Artemis’ temple, and his business generated a lot of profit for the craftspeople. He called a meeting with these people & others working in trades and said, “Friends, you know that we make an easy living from this business. You can see and hear that this Paul has convinced and misled a lot of people, not only in Ephesus but also throughout most of the province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands aren’t really gods. This poses a danger not only by discrediting our trade but also by completely dishonoring the great goddess Artemis... The city was thrown into turmoil. They rushed as one into the theater. They seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from the province of Macedonia.” **Acts 19:23-29 CEB***

To Combat This Danger We Must Expect it, Defend the Gospel, and live like Christ....

*“Who will harm you if you are zealous for good? But happy are you, even if you suffer because of righteousness! Don’t be terrified or upset by them. Instead, regard Christ the Lord as holy in your hearts. Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it. Yet do this with respectful humility, maintaining a good conscience. Act in this way so that those who malign your good lifestyle in Christ may be ashamed when they slander you. It is better to suffer for doing good (if this could possibly be God’s will) than for doing evil.” **1 Peter 3:13-17 CEB***

“Preach the word. Be ready to do it whether it is convenient or inconvenient. Correct, confront, and encourage with patience and instruction. There will

*come a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. They will collect teachers who say what they want to hear because they are self-centered. They will turn their back on the truth and turn to myths. But you must keep control of yourself in all circumstances. Endure suffering, do the work of a preacher of the good news, & carry out your service fully.” **2 Tim 4:2-5 CEB***

3. The Danger of Hypocritical Members

*Watch yourselves and the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as supervisors, to shepherd God’s church, which he obtained with the death of his own Son. I know that, after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you and won’t spare the flock. Some of your own people will distort the word in order to lure followers after them. Stay alert! Remember that for three years I constantly and tearfully warned each one of you. I never stopped warning you! **Acts 20:27-30 CEB***

To Combat This Danger We Must Deal With Unrepentant Sin...

*“I wrote to you in my earlier letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. But I wasn’t talking about the sexually immoral people in the outside world by any means—or the greedy, or the swindlers, or people who worship false gods—otherwise, you would have to leave the world entirely! But now I’m writing to you not to associate with anyone who calls themselves “brother” or “sister” who is sexually immoral, greedy, someone who worships false gods, an abusive person, a drunk, or a swindler. Don’t even eat with anyone like this. What do I care about judging outsiders? Isn’t it your job to judge insiders? God will judge outsiders. “Expel the evil one from among you!”” **1 Corinthians 5:9-13 CEB***

To Combat This We Must Have Repentance & Restoration As Our Goal

*“The majority of you have imposed a severe enough punishment on that person. So now forgive and comfort him. Such distress could overwhelm someone like that if he’s not forgiven and comforted. That is why I urge you to assure him that you love him. I had also written to you to test you. I wanted to see if you would be obedient in every way. If you forgive someone, so do I. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did in the presence of Christ for your benefit. I don’t want Satan to outwit us. After all, we are not ignorant about Satan’s scheming.” **2 Corinthians 2:6-11 GW***