

1 Timothy 4:1-5

Itching Ears or Burning Hearts

It is called Deception Pass an area of Coastline in Western Washington in the area of the Puget Sound.

A) Discovered in 1792 by the Explorer Joseph Whidbey

B) he named it Deception Pass because the main channel is barely 500 feet wide and under the glittering watery light, **an incalculable volume of water surges** back and forth through the narrow rock channels

C) This unseen turbulence can seize control of a ship without warning.

1) Countless boats have suffered shipwreck as a result.

Well As we come to the 4th Chapter of 1 Timothy Paul is warning believers about growing deception that will take place in the Last days.

A) A Deception **that can lead to spiritual shipwreck**

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B) Latter times is a little deceiving – it , is more properly understood when it is translated, "in succeeding seasons there will be many departing from the faith" –

C) this is something that is going to go on, the apostle is suggesting, throughout the whole course of Christian history, in succeeding seasons of time.

D) It will grow in it's severity in the days leading up to the rapture: Preparation for the Anti-Christ.

Consider recent History

In the last part of the 19th century, there was a pronounced season of deceit, when new cults that have occupied the scene ever since emerged here in America.

That is when **Mormonism was born** ;

Jehovah's Witnesses came into being during that latter part of the 19th century; Christian Science emerged.

All of these claimed to be Christian, yet they distorted biblical Christianity.

That period in the 19th century was followed by a period of quiet, when no new cults emerged.

Suddenly, in the mid-60's, it all broke loose again.

A) A torrent of error began to flood our churches and the media.

B) The Moonies came into existence under the Korean leader, Sun Myung Moon; the Hare Krishna, started appearing in airports, passing out literature and pinning flowers to lapels;

C) Scientology, with its strange and cruel doctrines, was born;

1) Transcendental Meditation came into popularity then.

Followed by the growing popularity in the 70-80's of the new age movement and Humanism.

A) Evolution would grow in it's popularity

B) That is what Paul is saying here – this type of false teaching will increase in latter days.

C) And During those times, Paul says, many will depart from the truth, depart from the faith as it is presented in the Scriptures.

DEPART is Strong word:

A) It means “to remove oneself from the position originally occupied to another place.”

B) It is a stronger term than either the word translated “straying” “suffered shipwreck- Paul mentions in Ch.1 1) It refers to a purposeful, deliberate departure from a former position.

C) From Christianity – from what the Bible says – to something that is contrary and different.

The Source of such deception:

1) **Deceiving spirits and Doctrine of demons.**

A) Men do not invent errors like this.

B) They come through men but the actual origin is Demonic in nature.

Satan tried to destroy the Church thru persecution – Back fired – the Church grew.

A) **Can't beat them join them – False teachers**

2 Cor.11:14-15 “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

B) As **God** speaks **truth** & uses people to share it;
so **Satan** speaks **lies** & uses people to share it!

C) These false teachers in many cases are deceitful liars who – spread their false doctrines by rejecting truth.

Conscience Seared: modern day word Cauterization: A) Freeze or Burn tissue – Past feeling –

B) they have allowed them to be so burnt that they have no feeling – no remorse – no guilt- Conviction.

C) Problem in Paul's day Asceticism –

1) The teaching that self-denial on the physical level was essential for true spirituality.

D) It was first characterized by the Essenes.

They were a Jewish sect that appeared in Palestine as early as the second century B.C.

A) They formed the Qumran community, near the Dead Sea, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

B) They practiced asceticism, denying marriage and enforcing special dietary regulations.

C) **Then came the Gnostics** Gnostics boasted of a secret, hidden knowledge.

D) They held a view that all matter was evil, and spirit good.

1) So Marriage and food, being aspects of the evil material world, were to be shunned.

E) Gnosticism was to pose a serious threat to the orthodox faith for several centuries.

Result of their view of marriage it was Also adopted by early Church fathers:

Tertullian and Ambrose: believed that the extinction of the human race was to be preferred above the sexual relationship with in marriage.

Ambrose wrote that married people ought to Blush at the state that they are living in.

Augustine argued that the sexual relationship was innocent in marriage but the passion that accompanies it is always sinful.

In other words if you are enjoying a passionate sexual relationship with your wife – according to Augustine you are in sin.

A) For that reason: Augustine frequently counseled marriage couples to abstain.

B) Praise God for the Puritans and the Protestant reformation – back to the Bible –

1) They exalted Marriage and

Why is asceticism so popular? Two reasons

1) **At the heart of it is a conviction that self-denial somehow pleases God.** { Earning Points w/ God.

A) He looks down on them more favorably if they are denying themselves things – that are ok to others.

1) It can be very earnest, very sincere.

B) Such thinking completely forgets that God knows our hearts thru and thru –

1) He said that Obedience means way more to Him than sacrifice.

2) Legalistic teachers have a way of making people feel really guilty –

A) So a decision to abstain from certain pleasures is in a warped way have a sense of easing a person's guilt.

B) They feel less guilty if they are following what the legalistic leader is telling them to do!

But Paul made it clear in Colossians that Bodily disciplines do not automatically advance spiritual life.

Col.2:23 “These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

So Paul says live in Freedom with thanksgiving:

⁴For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

A) If God made this food – made marriage – said abstain

B) Be like a parent candy jar – look but don’t touch

1) We don’t do that – Cruel – mean

C) God made these things for our enjoyment – He wants us to enjoy them- to the fullest.

1) Boundaries – according to His Word

2) Moderation-

3) With a Thankful heart.

COURSON: “Here’s how to be a good minister: Stay away from esoteric posturing, dietary discussions, and legalism. Keep the main thing the main thing. And the main thing is Jesus.”

The Biggest threat in the Church today in America is not Asceticism or Humanism or Darwinism It is Consumerism.

We are a nation of Consumers – Recent stats

Americans have been known to spend in a given year

110 Billion dollars on fast food.

85 Billion on lawns and gardens.

64 Billion on soft drinks.

38 Billion on state lotteries.

36 Billion on vending-machine products.

24 Billion on jewelry.

23 Billion on toys.

20 Billion on cosmetics.

40 Billion on gym memberships and diet plans

31 Billion on ice cream.

13 Billion on chocolate.

7 Billion on greeting cards.

600 million on teeth-whitening products.

We are a nation of consumers – the modern day Church is key in on that. Seeker User

Greg Laurie writes in his book the upside down Church:

“In my conversations with many pastors from around the country, I’ve noticed that a new word has entered into Church lingo- the word consumer.

Experts are telling us that people no longer attend a fellowship of believers to commune with God. They come to consume.

“And in order to thrive, Churches are going to have to adapt to the needs of the spiritual consumer.”

Here is the Problem Laurie continues-

“When you label someone a consumer, you are zeroing in on one thing- consumption. That means it is all about the appetite, what goes down the Hatch.”

“The Church becomes like Business competing with the other near by providers for the same customer. When that is your focus – suddenly your concerns change. You spend a whole lot more time asking questions like. What can I do to make my product more appealing and Unique? How can I improve customer service? How can I adjust what we offer to meet or beat the competition?”

Two of the Largest Churches in the Country:

Bill Hybels Willow Creek and Rick Warren’s Saddleback were started on this premise – **Door to door Survey’s** What do you want in a Church?

Tens of thousands of Churches have followed their model. Give them what they want.

A) There is a danger in that style of ministry to compromise the integrity of the word.

B) Avoid certain subjects – avoid things that might be offensive.

1) So in a lot of those kind of ministries – Congregants are encouraged not to bring Bibles to Church

2) The Reason: It might offend the seeker.

3) Avoid discussing sin or the Blood. Offensive.

Paul said this would be a part of the mindset of the Church in the last days. 2 Timothy 4 { Turn there

¹I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ²Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers*; ⁴and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Motivations: Own desires/ Itching ears

A) Tell us what we want to hear.

B) Denise talking to a lady Marriage –wife

1) Read what the Bible says I don’t feel that way.

C) Result: Turn away from the truth.

D) So the Seeker Church says: We are going to Scratch where it itches – **Warren –Focus on Felt Needs**

1) They argue: Hey if it works it must be God.

US News and world report cover story a few yrs back.

“American religion has taken on the aura of pop Psychology. Many congregations have multiplied their memberships by going light on theology and offering worshippers a steady diet of sermons and support groups that emphasize personal fulfillment.”

The Hottest selling books today in Christian book stores are books that offer advice on how to be successful.

- A) How to be better parents, spouses, employees, bosses, lovers, friends, how to overcome addiction and how to lose weight.
- B) While it is not wrong to address issues like this – it is wrong to make them the central focus of your ministry.
- C) **Result: Man focused ministry instead of a God focused Ministry.**
- D) **Problem isn't so much with what they are saying – Agree with a lot of it –**
 - 1) Problem is what they are not saying – Avoid sin conviction because it is going to offend.

Greg Laurie: Puts it well when he says “ If we train people to be consumers instead of communers we will end up with customers instead of disciples. It might fill an auditorium but it will never turn the world upside down for Christ.”

Consider these Stats – More Mega Churches than ever before in US History.

- A) More people going to Church than ever before.

But – During the last 3 decades Crime has increased 560%

Illegitimate births have increased 400%

Divorce rates have quadrupled.

The rate of Children being raised in single parent households has tripled.

According to FBI reports the number of violent crimes reported to police has jumped for 168 per 100,000 people in 1963 to 475 in 2004.

If the Church is getting Bigger then why is that the case.

- A) I suggest the reason is the Wrong Diet – might be bigger – but it is not Stronger.

B) Decision: Do we want itching ears or Burning hearts!

C) It happened on Rez morning: two men heading down the road that led to Emmaus from Jerusalem.

D) Their hopes dashed – their dreams shattered – they were depressed and disappointed

- 1) **Why? Jesus didn't come thru.**

They were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah – the Savior – thinking politically.

- A) **He was the one who would overthrow the Romans and set up a permanent Jewish Kingdom**

B) But all of those hopes and dreams came crashing down as they watched him nailed to the Cross.

C) They walked home in despair – You see they hadn't heard about the Rez.

Well Jesus came along – walking on that Rd met them – Hood – Disguised – didn't recognize

- A) **Why are you guys so bummed out ?**

B) They responded – are you a stranger

We thought he was the one !

C) Jesus began to speak to them – take them thru the OT – pointing out all the passages – messiah suffer

1) That is not what they wanted to HEAR !

D) Their Messiah was **not a Suffering Messiah – they didn't want to hear that –**

1) But it is exactly what they needed to hear

E) Understand – His first coming was about conquering **Sin and death & the Devil**

1) Man's greatest Problem

They didn't want to hear that message – but they needed to.

A) They would say later – that As Jesus spoke to them in this way – their hearts Burned

B) That is what we need – Burning Hearts – not tickled ears

1) That means sometimes God's word is going to Convict – Burning of the Chaff – to get Wheat.

C) **The truth burns in the heart in 3 ways**

1) Ignites the heart to love God more.

2) Warms the heart in encouragement.

3) Inflames the heart in conviction – I have got to do something about my sin.

Repentance: Change of mind attitude and approach