

The Doctrine of Biblical Separation: Guarding the Purity of the Faith in an Age of Compromise

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[0:00] Good evening everybody. Welcome. Looking at a subject of biblical separation tonight. Sometimes! I get asked the question, why is it a problem with this particular movement or this association! Or go to this concert, this crusade, listen to this music, whatever it be. And there's reasons for that. Because we want to guard the purity of the faith in an age of compromise.

So you can see you've got your notes in hand, the people present and people watching you can download it there at the URL or the QR code. And often it's the case really when you think of separation, it's about really making a decision about what's acceptable and what's not. And individually we might come to a different place on that, similar to how we talked about last week about personal soul liberty. But my position is really it's often best to err on the side that is stricter. That's the safer side to err on if you're going to take sides for being where they're really lax or actually are going to be a bit strict on what we accept or what we don't accept. So to introduce it then, what is biblical separation? You could picture it like building a fence around a garden. You're not blocking out the sun, that's not the object, but you're keeping out the weeds.

If you're at a fork in the road and you could choose to go the clear path of truth, you know, there's a crystal clear stream flowing or a muddy road that leads to a muddy stream of compromise, which one are you going to choose? I know lately like with our rainwater, sometimes you think, oh, that's a bit cloudy, a bit muddy. You wouldn't want to really pick that kind of water if you had a choice. But there's that choice about what are you going to accept? Is it going to be compromised or is it going to be clear? And separation, biblical separation is God's command to separate, to be distinct from the world and false doctrine. Its object is to protect the church from falsehood, to protect the purity of the church and our witness as a church, our testimony, to protect the church from sin or error or apostasy and to promote rather holiness and purity and fellowship with God. It's not about pride or coldness, so it's not about being mean or picking fights. It's about obeying God, obedience, and it's preserving the light of truth in a world that's prone to compromise. So you can see how really we see it today. Often many churches are embracing all kinds of beliefs as equally valid. There's a lot of ecumenical unity and it sounds appealing in a way having associations with other believers, but where there's a compromise, it's a problem, where you're trying to blend truth with error. And compromise is like a crack in a dam.

It can be small at first, but eventually it's catastrophic. And just on the home front too, we had with our rainwater tank, we were wondering why our rainwater is running out and we found a leak. So now that rainwater is going to start to build up. We'll actually have some drinking water for summer. So it takes a little crack, a little leak, doesn't it? And that little compromise can make a big difference. And separation is like this solid dam that's not got a hole in it, it's not got a crack in it. It's going to keep the truth flowing pure. Some scriptures then, we've got that scripture there, 2 Corinthians 6. It's one of the fundamental ones. People often talk to that one, 2 Corinthians 6, 14 to 18. It tells us, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers? For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And it reads on, Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing? And I will receive you, and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. So it's honouring to our

Lord. He wants us to have that separation. It's a good thing. Really, it's from day one of Genesis. It was literally day one. He separated the light from the darkness. It's a God thing. It's a good thing. Romans 16, 17 tells us we should mark those who cause divisions and offences, avoid them. It tells us, Ephesians 5, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

And Jude chapter 1 verses 3 and 4 tells us you should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. And 2 John chapter 1 verse 9 through 11 talks about receive him not into your house. And you could apply that one to, for example, when the J-dubs knock your door or the Mormons. We don't bid them farewell because they're really teaching a false Jesus. And it tells us receive him not into your house. So you could apply that scripture to John there. Now about separation, it's, in a way it's twofold. It's separation from error and separation unto God.

[5:07] It's both refusing fellowship or association with that which is darkness, and it's a separation unto God. It's a holy thing. It's to honour our Lord. It's to be like him. And back to the notes, the biblical mandate for separation. You could see some Old Testament foundations for that.

And we know of God's very nature, he is holy. It's his very nature, his character. And the call to separation is right through the word of God, like a golden thread from Abraham to the apostles. God's message is consistent, that God is holy, and we should be holy. We should be different also. And Israel was called to be God's distinct people, peculiar people. Leviticus 20, verse 26, and you shall be holy unto me, for I, the Lord, am holy, and I've severed you from other people, that you should be mine. There's a separation. It's God's pattern. And then other instances we could see when Israel compromised, there was a marrying of pagans. There was this toleration of idolatry. Numbers of examples we could cite, as you see listed here in Ezra, God called the people to separate from the strange wives, the unbelieving. And Numbers, it talks about, again, the compromise there that was going on. And God's angry at that. Apostasy in Judges 2, it talks about failing to separate from the Canaanites. In 1 Kings, it's an example in your notes there, Solomon's heart was turned away. And it was by unholy alliances. He married a whole lot of pagan wives, and it turned his heart away. So there's a lot of serious consequences. And God's constantly telling his people right from the Old Testament, right from Abraham's call, seeing Nehemiah's reforms too, constant calling to that distinction. God wants his people to stand out, not blend in.

Then on to the New Testament. There's all sorts of commands in the New Testament as well. As we touched on, to mark and avoid false teaching, 2 Thessalonians tells us, withdraw from the brother that walks disorderly. 2 Timothy 3, of some it says they've got a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof from such turn away. And our Lord urges us in the context, ultimately, of his coming, that we should beware of deception, of false Christs, of false prophets.

They're going to show signs and wonders. All sorts of warnings in that context too. And 2 Timothy 4 tells us of a time they will not ensure sound doctrine. After their own lust, they're going to heap to themselves, teachers having itching ears. They shall turn away their ears from the truth, shall be turned unto fables. In the notes it talks there, just a kind of colloquial kind of example.

[8:02] If you had your grandma's apple pie recipe and you started to just change it, maybe you switch the sugar for salt or you do something or do something, you take out one of those key ingredients and it messes the whole thing up. And separation too can really be very damaging. We want to keep the gospel pure and our witness. There's lots of Bible examples you could talk about. These aren't in your notes, but some characters there from the Bible. Noah, he was separated. Abraham, Moses. Nehemiah refused to compromise with Sanballat and Tobias. Paul, he's separated from false brethren. And our Lord himself, he was wholly harmless, undefiled, separate. So lots of good examples, especially our Lord, we do well to follow those Bible examples. Next section, some areas where you could consider, oh, that's a bit of a compromise. It's something that's not so good. And there's lots of historical examples and contemporary situations too. Apostasy, doctrinal compromise. And compromise is not something new. It's like Brother Mike was sharing about the Trinity. Heresies have been around right from day dot of the early days of the church where they even questioned fundamentals like the Trinity.

And we've still got those contemporary examples today, the J-Dubs, Mormons, you name it, who don't get the Trinity. So compromise is not something necessarily new. Sometimes it's just wearing different disguises today. And you see that there, apostasy, doctrinal compromise. 2 Thessalonians 2.3 tells us, let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except become a

falling away first. And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. It tells us there's going to be a falling away, which we could understand as an apostasy of falling away from the truth.

And then 1 Timothy 4 tells us, now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

That's pretty serious, isn't it? Doctrines of devils. It talks about damnable heresies as well. They're very serious things where doctrine gets really off track. And it's a slippery slope, you could reckon, as it's almost like a gradual decline.

Might start innocently, let's agree to disagree, oh we'll just accommodate. But then it ends tragically with ultimately truth doesn't matter. They throw truth out the window. And of course we know that's very serious stuff.

[10:45] That sort of gradual decline, you see step by step, tolerance, association, accommodation, promotion, full apostasy. And of course the Bible tells us to keep our heart with all diligence.

Stay vigilant. Some examples you could think of, things we could take note of. The Roman Catholic Church is a classic one, where really they've got a false gospel.

And we know in Revelation 17, 18, it talks about the harlot church system, the mother of harlots.

You could see that reflected in the Roman Catholic Church in many ways.

And Roman Catholicism, it's got this appearance of Christianity. They've got cathedrals and crosses and religious language. But when you scratch underneath the surface, there's not biblical truth there.

And there's a whole lot of unbiblical additions they've added to. So for example, Rome teaches a false gospel. It's through faith plus works, sacraments, tradition.

[11:45] And it's directly contradicting the essential gospel, which we see here. Ephesians 2, 8 through 9 is really a fundamental outline of that essential gospel.

For by grace you are saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, though any man should boast. So salvation is a gift. It's not of works, whereas Rome would say it's plus works.

And likewise, Galatians 1, there's warning there, the Lord, through Paul, warns of this other gospel that would pervert the gospel, such that it isn't really another gospel.

It's actually not a gospel at all, because gospel means good news. There's no good news in a false gospel. And Paul warns about this perversion of the gospel. Of course, we could see that, for example, in Mormonism, when it says on there, is it the first page or so, another testament of Jesus Christ, and it came from an angel.

It's like a classic. That's Galatians 1. Very clearly, for example, it's another gospel. It's another Jesus. And so it's very dangerous. And Rome has that, for one. And you can see, for example, some of the practices of the Roman Catholic Church, where they make graven images.

[12:56] And that's a fundamental one of the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. It's very clear not to bow down to such images.

And they get away from the authority and the supremacy of the scripture they make, the Pope, to have this infallibility when he speaks ex cathedra, like when he's on his throne, that he can be the mouth of God and can't deny what he says is true.

Whereas the Bible says we should test everything, test every man. And the authority is not some man or tradition, but it's the word of God, and not some man. And, of course, we know they pray to Mary.

There's Mary worship and the saints. And, essentially, it's idolatry. It's scripture that is our authority, as 2 Timothy 3 tells us. And Revelation 18.4 tells us to come out of her, my people.

You can reflect that's alike to how we should come out of Rome, or anything like Rome, which is a compromise, and it's an idolatrous religion. Funny enough, I saw this lately on Facebook, and it pictures it well and truly.

[14:06] Like God says, don't make any graven images, don't carve idols. And then the Catholics, they've got shelves full of idols. And I've been in shops like that. There's a shop in Adelaide like that.

I was looking for a Christian bookshop. I thought it was a Christian bookshop, but it was just full of statues, full of statues and idols and icons and graven images. And so Catholics are going completely contrary to one of the Ten Commandments there, Exodus 20, making idols.

Another area we should be warned about is the charismatic and Pentecostal movements. And we know these movements, they elevate extra-biblical revelation.

So outside of the Bible, they make it what someone says in some ecstatic utterance. They make that equate to the Word of God, and they elevate signs and tongues and all these subjective experiences above Scripture.

So when you elevate experience above Scripture, then you know that's wrong. We should elevate Scripture above experience. That's the proof. That's the truth. And we know they get it all wrong with the tongue speaking, biblical tongues.

[15:16] Some people ask me, do you believe in tongues? Yeah, of course we do. We believe in biblical tongues. We believe in the tongues that the Bible tells us about and how they were exercised biblically.

We believe in biblical tongues, which were real known languages and had a purpose and a reason that they were given, not in these ecstatic, unintelligible utterances, this gibberish, this gobbledygook that is common in some churches, which is entirely contrary to scriptural truth.

And the Bible tells us we should test everything. Even when someone utters a prophecy, speaks as if they're saying, thus saith the Lord, if they speak in the name of the Lord and it come not to pass, it says, that prophet has spoken presumptuously.

It's not of God. It's nothing to do with God. It's not God's Word. And in the context of Deuteronomy 18, it says such a prophet, they should stone them to death and not go and follow them.

Whereas we're seeing it these days, there's so many that call themselves a prophet, apostle, and yet there's manifold false prophecies and manifold false teachings, totally unbiblical teachings, and people just fall for it.

[16:27] Whereas the Bible tells us that experience should be the guide, and that should yield to Scripture, not the other way around, because it tells us that our heart is deceitful, desperately wicked. Oh, but it feels so good, pastor.

Well, it doesn't make it right. We can get all kinds of... And I've been in meetings like that, as I used to belong to that kind of movement, and you get all kinds of sensations and feel-good experiences, but when you actually examine it by Scripture, if it's not scriptural, then you've got to reject it and have nothing to do with it.

Next example we could think of is Freemasonry, secret societies, and this is a real very plain one, that we're not to be joining party with such things.

In the Freemasons, they have all kinds of oaths and occult kind of elements. The Bible says not to do such a thing, not to have such a secret oaths and whatnot, and there's a syncretism where there's all kinds of acceptance of all kinds of many paths to God kind of idea, but the Lord Jesus, he is the one and only way.

He says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. And it's very clear we should touch not the unclean thing. Joining party with such a movement is a big compromise.

[17:49] The Freemasons, when you examine it at the higher levels, when people get more and more truth, so-called truth revealed, they see who they actually worship, and it's not the God of the Bible.

In fact, it's essentially Lucifer. Another example for separation is music, contemporary Christian music.

Now, you've got to set the bar for yourself on this one. Maybe it's a bit of a personal liberty thing. But again, I would urge caution. Like, when you see some of the CCM, which is what you'd abbreviate it to, contemporary Christian music, they use a lot of worldly methods.

There's a lot of question marks, huge question marks, because especially when it seems to be founded on the world's music, the world's values, worldly musical styles, often shallow lyrics, and it's often associated with ecumenical compromise too.

Some of the popular CCM artists are actually Roman Catholics. I've heard lately that apparently one of the popular hits on the Christian music charts is actually a Muslim who sings it, because it sounds, oh, it sounds, yeah, it's almost like it's vague enough that a Christian could think, oh, that

sounds catchy and something that I like.

[19:09] But when you actually examine it, it's really dodgy. And so we've got to be careful about such a compromise. And you've got classic scriptures there, to be not conformed to this world.

Think the world's kind of thinking, what the world likes, it's generally a bit sus. And then love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. So if it's got that worldly style, that worldly sentiment, then you think, hmm, it's a bit sus, I'm going to rather avoid it.

The thing with contemporary Christian music, it can desensitise us to separation principles. Now, years ago, when I was a much younger parent, and my children were still at home, they went to a Youth Alive concert.

At the time, I wasn't a Bible-believing Baptist. I was in the Pentecostal movement. And my two boys came home from the Youth Alive concert, and they said, oh, my neck's sore.

And they were telling them that their neck was sore. And they'd learned all about headbanging. Headbanging. So whatever they do at a worldly rock concert, they're headbanging in the mosh pit.

[20:17] And this was a Christian meeting. They went to a Christian meeting where they had a mosh pit, and they had headbanging. And my two sons learned all about headbanging in the mosh pit at Youth Alive.

You think, hmm, that doesn't sound like it's a very wholesome thing. It doesn't sound like it's a separation that would glorify God when we're doing worldly things and carrying on just like the world.

Maybe they changed the lyrics to sound a bit Christian, but it's sus. It's not separation. And the Bible commands us to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Our singing should be such that it edifies. It's teaching and admonishing one another. There's actually doctrine. There's actually truth in what we sing. That's why we try to be careful with the song choices we make as a church.

We want to make sure that there's truth to what we sing. We're not just singing any old thing. And it's going to be a blessing. It's going to be pleasing to the Lord as well.

[21:19] And, of course, the Bible tells us, can two walk together except they be agreed. So rather, they're on the side of worship and activities that are going to be glorifying to God.

And it's going to have sound teaching to it as well. Another area of separation, ecumenism and compromising personalities.

We know some would have the view, well, it's unity at all costs, at the expense of the truth. But, no, it's not. The unity that we should have is a godly unity.

It's the unity of the Spirit. It talks about one faith. It's a unity of faith. Biblical unity that's standing on the fundamentals of the faith. And the Lord Jesus says, Sanctify them, make them holy, separate them through thy truth.

Thy word is truth. It's truth-based, the separation. And, of course, our Lord says, Enter in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.

[22:21] Many of the being which go in thereat, because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. It's that essential that Christ is the narrow way.

It's not some broad way. And as an example of some compromising personalities, you could think, just to cite some particular personalities, Billy Graham.

Billy Graham, many would see that he did a lot of good, and essentially he probably did do a lot of good. He had great numbers at his rallies, at his crusades, but on the negative side, and this is a big negative, he yoked together with Catholics and liberals.

He actually sent people off to false churches, to dead churches. Sometimes when they were a person who made a profession of faith that had a Catholic background, he sent them off to a Catholic church.

And so that's the real terrible truth about Billy Graham, that he had a serious compromise there. It was a shallow gospel. It was a big compromise in what he actually accommodated.

[23:29] And that's a real problem. Another example, and I've only really just come to catch on to this. For example, we know Charlie Kirk.

There's a lot of good that he did. There's a lot of good things that he stood for. I like a lot of what he did in some of his debates on more political, social, kind of more values kind of issues, and he was very good at debating.

And some of his debating was good about the gospel as well. But the thing, the problem here with Charlie Kirk, I've just come to see that more clearly of recent weeks really, and the organisation that Charlie Kirk established, and there's an Australian version of it too, Turning Point, Turning Point USA, there's value to what he put as far as political activism, and we could agree with a lot of his stance against abortion, against some of the woke things that are going on.

But he had a rather vague stand on some essentials. For example, here's some quotes of his, I go to Catholic Mass every once in a while.

His wife was of a Catholic persuasion, so that's a serious problem. And the Catholic Mass is an abomination. We don't want to have anything to do with it. He said, We as Protestants and Evangelicals under-venerate Mary.

[24:55] He thought that we should venerate Mary. The Bible doesn't teach us to venerate Mary at all, so we shouldn't have any such veneration of Mary. We could regard her as another godly saint, and had a special role, but we don't venerate her, we don't give her worship.

Another quote, I'm an Evangelical Christian, but I pray the new Pope will help usher in a new golden age of Christianity. If the new Pope defends the faith, defends the West, defends biology and eternal truths, I will be his biggest fan.

Now, the Pope is really an absolute representation of falsehood. One of the biggest examples of a false teacher that you could imagine. And so we can't really honour the Pope.

Even the word Pope, we shouldn't even call him Pope, which means Father, because the Bible says, Call no man Father. And they call him Pope, which means Father. So we shouldn't even call him the Pope. And if he's defending the faith, it's not the Bible faith, it's the Catholic faith, which is a false faith, and it's a false Jesus.

So it's a real warning there about some of the things that he stood for, despite the good that he's done. And likewise, the last quote there, and this was on the last day that he lived, I love how you send missionaries around the world.

[26:14] That is beautiful. He's talking to Mormons. Now, well-meaning as those Mormons are, the gospel they're sending around the world is a lie, and it's going to send people to hell, not to heaven.

And so it's nothing, there's nothing beautiful about Mormon missionaries. So all of these things would give you a very big warning sign about a personality like this, as much as I can see the good that he did, and I like a lot of what he has said.

But as far as the gospel goes, and as far as the accommodation of error, it's a big warning sign there. And really, when you think about it, our battle is not political, but it's spiritual.

Ephesians 6 verse 12, as much as I'm politically active in a kind of way, I don't want it to dilute my gospel witness or my gospel testimony. And the thing with Charlie Kirk, sadly, he accommodated Catholics and Mormons like Glenn Beck, who's an absolute false teacher, and charismatics, prosperity gospel preachers.

They didn't have any gospel stand and was very weak. And of course, we know the Lord says, my kingdom is not of this world. It's not political unity that can substitute for doctrinal purity.

[27:32] And it's really an unholy alliance. Some areas where we could consider it astray from our understanding of scripture, there's a lot of false teachings out there, a lot of extremes of different views.

For example, within Calvinism, they deny the genuine gospel offer, which is John 3.16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

So sadly, Calvinism restricts the gospel scope, whereas God says it's for the whole world and whosoever believeth. So there's a genuine gospel offer and there's other scriptures there you see that here's the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

In prospect, there is a provision and God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. There's a provision that is made and it says of God, who will have all men to be saved to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

And it says, our Lord gave himself a ransom for all. Sadly, Calvinism misses that, I believe, and it's misrepresenting the gospel.

[28:50] So you should be careful of that. We know people amongst us have got different views or different backgrounds. It's like I've had a different background. I was well and truly schooled by the Pentecostal movement, but I don't go along with that now.

I can see that differently now. And so we don't want to accommodate that extreme. There's extremes of Calvinism. Another area is Lordship Salvation as well.

Lordship Salvation, that's very common. It's very sadly common amongst independent Baptists, numbers of them, where they're confusing faith with works.

And it's undermining grace. It's a big problem. And again, that scripture, the classic one, it's not by works. Ephesians 2, it says, but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

So it's not that our works make us saved. They follow on. That's the sanctification part. Whereas the Lordship Salvation people, they're confusing justification with sanctification.

[29:52] And really, when you think about it, it undermines the sufficiency of Christ's finished work. They add submission or commitment into the equation. Well, you believe, but you've got to have submission or commitment as well.

No, it's by faith you're saved. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you're saved. The Lordship Salvation, have faith, plus you've got to do this or do that, to add to believing faith.

Sure enough, we should add to faith, but that's after we're saved. Add to your faith. Yes, do that, but that's after you're saved. And then you've got, again, Pentecostalism. It's another distraction, really, where they've got emotionalism, experience-driven.

They open the door to false prophets. And I've been in Pentecostalism, like I say. It's like they jump on the bandwagon with whoever the next supposed great teacher is and whatever the next great meeting is.

They're just following after signs, which we know is a fleshly thing. And then you've got the other area of compromising with the actual Bible that you use as well. God is not the author of confusion.

[30:59] It says there's Psalm 12. The modern versions, they compromise. And rather we stand on the faithful work, the Bible, the King James Bible, as that authority, that faithful translation of the faithful text.

So there's a whole range of things we could talk about, of ecumenism, of the interfaith, the World Council of Churches. It's like there's Chris Lamb now. They're trying to...

It's not just an accommodation of different views within Christianity, but accommodating with false religions, like Islam, for example. There's a whole lot of compromise going on. So here you see the next section, the dangers of compromise.

What does compromise do? It perverts, it weakens, it confuses, perverts the gospel. And that's the devil's tactics, isn't it? We know he's masquerading like this angel of light.

He tricked Eve in the garden. It says that some are going to come preaching another Jesus. It's going to be another spirit. It's going to be another gospel.

[32:00] All of these perversions are out there and they're happening today. And here's a bit of a slide. It's not in your notes. You can see some examples, for example, of perversions of the gospel.

So how we would understand, you could see there's six different types of perversions there where you're adding to the gospel, you're taking away from the gospel, or you're just changing it, that it's no gospel at all.

So Catholicism and many cults, they say it's faith plus works. You've got to work. Your faith is not enough. And the lordship salvationists would say, it's faith plus lordship.

You've got to come under obedience as well. So it's works, essentially, is what they're saying. It's faith plus the sacraments, is what the Catholics would tell us.

Lutheranism and Anglicanism also go that same track. You've got to have certain rituals, confessions or confirmations, whatever it be. Then the number four there, faith plus baptism, the kind of American Church of Christ and some Pentecostals say, you've got to be baptised to be saved.

[33:10] No, it doesn't say that. And then you've got the seventh days, where it's, again, faith plus obedience. The seventh days, believe you can lose your salvation. So you've got to hang on to it by what you do.

Again, it's works. It's a works-based teaching. And then at the bottom, you've got those that think, it's faith plus nothing. Everybody's going to get saved. I saw something lately. Apparently, the current paper said something like that.

Everybody's going to get saved. All of those things are a false gospel. They're perversions of the gospel. We want to be very careful about that. Another danger of compromise, it's a loss of your testimony and your power and the power of the church, the purity of the church.

In Revelation 2 to 3, there's rebukes there of all kinds of churches. They accommodated, they tolerated all kinds of false doctrine. In Revelation 2 and 3, the two chapters, God rebukes them and he says that judgment is upon them.

And then 1 Corinthians 5 verse 6, again, that idea of the peril of association where the Corinthians accommodated this false teaching. They accommodated this compromise where immorality was kind of turned a blind eye to.

[34:24] And the peril of association, it's like leaven, as I've talked about lately. It just spreads and takes over. And there's a loss of the church's power. Next one, another danger of compromise is spiritual confusion.

And we know the devil's the author of confusion, not God. And the Lord Jesus says, take heed that no man deceive you. Many are going to come and say, I am Christ, and they shall deceive many. And again, that scripture there as well of the not enduring of sound doctrine, turning away their ears from the truth. Confusion.

False teaching just breeds that and it just gets worse and worse. Takes away the life of the church. Let's look at more of the positive sides. I know we dwell a lot on the negative sides.

And really, separation is not a negative thing per se. It's actually a blessed thing. It's not a burden. It's a blessing. And it encourages us in so many ways.

[35:28] And when a church is truly separated, it's going to safeguard the purity of the church. And Paul tells Timothy, the church of the living God is the pillar and foundation.

It's the ground of the truth. There's a sense where it's the pillar, so the column, and it's the ground or the foundation of the truth. So it's the whole structure of the church is truth.

And we know in Ephesians 5, 27, Paul talks about the church. He says, God's plan is the church be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Should be pure, like a pure bride.

It's that picture of purity. It's something very special that God wants. So separation is that blessed picture of purity. And see Titus 2 tells us how we should be looking for the blessed hope.

We know that we should be denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. He's called us to be a people purified unto himself, a peculiar people, distinct and zealous of good works. We should be that special people that are evidently God's people.

[36:29] And then Philippians 2, along the same theme, in this crooked and perverse nation, we should be shining as lights. We should be blameless and harmless. We should have that true godly witness.

That's God's plan, to have that clear gospel witness. They searched the scriptures when Paul preached and they wanted to make sure it was biblical. They wanted to make sure that it was true, that it lined up with scripture.

Also, separation brings God's blessings. We know that blessed is the man who walks not in all of the garbage, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. He loves the Lord.

He loves his word. He meditates in it day and night. He's like that tree planted in that firm place by the waters and there's a godliness there. There's a good thing there.

God's blessing. Blessed is the man. And we know separated churches, sometimes they may not grow wide, may not be a big group, sometimes a separated church, but they grow deep.

[37:29] Hopefully, God helping us will have a depth that we'll love the word, we'll love the scriptures, we'll love the truth, we'll love sound doctrine and that's going to be something that's going to be a firm foundation.

It's going to be a way that our church can be strong in a world that's very compromising where it's all about crowds, it's all about manufacturing big gatherings of people where it's a mixed multitude. But rather that our heart should be that we want to have God's well done, that we want to be that church that we're a people that's set apart as Paul tells Timothy of that cleansing, that Timothy would be that vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet, fit for the master's use, prepared unto every good work, that we can be all of us, each one of us can be more and more so such a vessel unto honour, to bring God glory and blessing.

Next section, practical application. How do we put all this into practice? You could think of it really on the personal level. It's about each one of us getting right with God individually, that daily discipline.

How can I be more like my Lord wants me to be? And he tells you, be ye holy for I am holy. He says, present your bodies a living sacrifice. So separation, it starts on the personal level, starts one by one, individually, each one of us.

[38:50] Coming to that mind, is that worldly or is that godly? Is that pursuing holiness without honouring my Lord or is it a question mark? I'd rather leave it alone. Again, about worldly friendship.

The one who's going to be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. And Paul tells the Corinthians, evil communications or association with evil or evil company is going to corrupt good manners. Questionable relationships can hinder our testimony. So rather build faith-based relationships. Make friends with God's people. Get around God's people rather than cultivating worldly friendships.

So these are just tips, really. And then on the church front, ecclesiastical, meaning the church separation, how can we as a church be careful and God helping us we try to be.

We love to go to other things that like-minded churches and churches that we would see very much eye to eye with. We've got no problem with going along to such things, partnering with other churches that they've got a similar stand on doctrine that we have.

[40:08] But we want to refuse partnerships with churches that are questionable and we cannot really partner with such movements if they deny or compromise on the fundamentals.

So, for example, there's lots of ecumenical things that come about, Jesus in the park or whatever it be, different things. They think, oh, it's just Christians getting together.

But then, not sure that we would at least formally want to be involved or to be partnering with that because there's a question mark there.

There's a mishmash of all kinds of doctrines and it's questionable because then we're seen by going to such a thing, at least as a church going to such a thing, it could be seen as, hey, do you agree with all of that then?

Is that what you go along with? No, we don't. Rather that we would err on the side of being careful. So, it says that we should have no company when someone's not biblical.

[41:07] Again, mark a void and rather that assembling of ourselves together. We want godly fellowships. So, where there's good godly churches getting together and they're inviting us to things, we're very glad to be a part and to support them and to have association with them.

But we want to be careful where we take that. So, it could be there's some gospel concert, there's some famous preacher comes along to Adelaide. We can make our own personal decisions about all of that but as a church we wouldn't want to be associated with that in some formal kind of way as if we're right behind that when we're not.

And so, church choices matter. The next one, discernment, vigilance, these are fundamentals. Test everything by scripture. John says, believe not every spirit.

You've got to test the spirits. Are they of God? There's many false prophets. There's many areas where you've got to be careful. There's some three questions you could ask there whether I join up with something.

Is it biblical? Is the gospel pure or does this ministry practice separation? If there's a question, maybe leave it alone. Of course, sound doctrine is essential.

[42:17] Paul says, take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine. Here's some examples, some practical examples. These aren't in your notes. So, how to practice biblical separation.

Just some tips you could maybe think about for yourself. Study and discern. Come to your own mind on it. Again, you might have a particular conviction that might not be another's conviction like we talked about last week of that personal soul liberty.

But come to your own mind on it before God to get a settled conviction, hopefully a biblically based conviction to test all things by scripture. Refuse fellowship with apostasy. So, don't partner with something if it's obviously out of line with God.

Speak out against error. Don't be afraid to confront error. Be humble about it too. You don't get prideful just because you think you've got the right doctrine and everyone else is a heretic.

We can get prideful and that's just the flesh really under a Christian guise and people get prideful about rebuking things. As we're all learning, we're all growing and then stay focused on Christ.

[43:28] It's not about isolation. We just hunker down in some holy huddle and have nothing to do with anybody else but it's a consecration. We're standing for our Lord. Next section, answering objections.

Some people would say, oh, you're being so unloving, pastor. You're being so unloving by rebuking this or rebuking that but the Bible says we should speak the truth in love. Really, truth is love.

It can be a loving thing is to tell the truth rather than not to tell the truth. It's important that we speak truth and it tells us that even our Lord Jesus says, I came not to send peace but a sword.

Sometimes there is division but it's a good division because we can actually be clear about where we stand with this or that. So true love protects the truth. It stands for the truth. And then some would say, it's about evangelism.

There's this concert. There's this crusade. There's this famous evangelist coming to Adelaide.

Shouldn't we all just go along and join up with this cause? The gospel's getting out there but there's a question mark sometimes where it's not the right gospel.

[44:32] It's not a pure gospel or they're compromising with all kinds of falsehood like the Catholics or you name it. There's some crusades just accommodate all kinds of churches and all kinds of false teachings like the charismatic movement.

Then they send them off to the Alpha Course or whatever it be where they're just getting totally indoctrinated in a whole lot of false doctrine. So rather that the gospel we stand for is true and that decides whether we join up with this or that event that we want to be sure that we're standing for the truth.

Like Paul talks about how we should feed the Church of God. We know there's grievous wolves. He says warn everyone. There's that thought of actually we've got to get the truth clear and stand for that not just accommodate any kind of evangelism or any kind of crusade.

We've got to be wary about that. Now that's not to say on an individual level you might choose to go to a Christian concert of this or that. You've got to make your own mind up about your preferences about your convictions and decide for yourself.

But as far as the Church joining up and standing on the platform and speaking alongside or standing alongside or funding a crusade that's questionable we wouldn't want anything to do with that.

[45:49] Peter says to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul with strangers and pilgrims. We should actually not be afraid to say oh you're strange. You go to that church you're a strange Christian.

Yeah that's okay. The Bible says we should be a bit strange. We should be a bit peculiar. We should be daring to be different. That's okay. And some would say you're separating over minor things.

No we're not separating over minor things but we want to stand for the fundamentals. It's not about isolation. It's about purity. And that's the spiritual power in purity. That sets us apart as God's people.

We are the set apart. And that's to say we're prideful and we're I'm holier than thou and I'm a better Christian than the other Christians. But no before God we want to please our Lord.

We want to be as a stranger and pilgrim unto his glory to stand for him because we love him. And so some blessings there about biblical separation in that one that we started with to come out and be separate.

[46:53] He says at the end of that he says I will receive you when we come out and be separate. He says I will receive you 2 Corinthians 6. Paul

talks of having a conscience void of offense. Peter says having that conscience there as well to be a sound testimony to give an answer to witness with meekness and fear and then Paul tells Timothy to pass it on commit what you've learnt to others that they will then be able to teach others also.

There's that kind of passing on to faithful men. Psalm 78 the first eight verses talk about telling your children so mums and dads there's a big thing there tell your children the truth that's a great one to look up for homework Psalm 78 how mums and dads should tell their children and then those children should tell their children God helping us that's what I would hope for that when I'm dead and gone my children my grandchildren are going to be walking in the faith and following on it's a very fundamental thing isn't it?

you want others to know the Lord and to walk in his ways that there'll be something left for your life that they will know the Lord they'll come to their own personal profession of Christ we see Paul says I've fought the good fight I've kept the faith one day we're going to see him there'll be a crowning the blessing of biblical separation is that it's unto him isn't it?

we're doing it unto him we're standing for the faith and this is the last section there in conclusion we can think how can I have that standing for the faith how can I stand firm and to sum it all up it's commanded like we started off with come out and be separate it's commanded it's not an option we don't do it because we are some isolationist kind of church or as if we've got the monopoly on the truth but where there's a clear falsehood we want to come out from that we don't want to join up with the ecumenical movement because some people say oh have you been to the ministers fraternal the play for church leaders group well actually I don't go to that because it's too much compromise there because they've got all kinds of falsehood they've got Roman Catholics conceivably they've got Seventh-day Adventists they've got all kinds of Pentecostal preachers teachers female pastors there's a whole lot of stacks and stacks of compromise there so as a church as a pastor

I don't join up with the local ministers fraternal because it's just a conglomeration of falsehood and I don't want to be seen to be supporting that so we command it to be separate and it's a protection of the truth again there's false gospels out there the charismatic gospel the lordship salvation gospel people with the confused definition of repentance as far as the gospel there's a whole lot of falsehood out there that's basically front loading or back loading the gospel with works we don't want to have any other gospel other than the simple gospel believe on the lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved we want that truth to be fundamental and we want to mark error such that we avoid it and we want to honour our lord fundamentally and in a way we're alike to the biblical picture of that remnant people of that faithful people right through the pages of scripture as we said right from day one he separated the darkness from the light and we see right through the bible the whole history of the bible the people of god the faithful people of god they were a remnant they were strangers and pilgrims they were aliens they were peculiar people they were distinct and it's this standard this foundation that the lord knows them that are his that everyone that nameth the name of christ depart from iniquity we want to have a clear stand against that we don't have bowed to bail or any other kind of bail or any other falsehood we want to be pleasing to our lord like we started off with this scripture to not be unequally yoked together so join together be yoked together with someone who's an unbeliever you can't have that fellowship of righteousness with unrighteousness and he says come out and be separate and it's all to his glory he says i will receive you when we see his face we'll know yeah god helping us we've stood for the right we've made a stand of faith we've sought to please our lord and he's our father we want to please him and we want to be good stewards of what life we have we want to be clean vessels unto his honour so biblical separation it's not legalism or isolation it's faithful obedience and it preserves the faith it protects the church it honours our testimony the world would say blend but god would say no stand stand don't kind of blend or accommodate let's stand clearly when we see the scriptures we want to stand clearly for the gospel truth let us pray dear lord we thank you that you are the truth and lord we thank you for your word of truth lord we thank you for the gospel lord the great grace of god that we should know your saving by faith lord we thank you for your blessed leading of your spirit through your word help us lord to be a biblical people not in a rambunctious kind of fleshly prideful way as if we've arrived and others haven't but lord that you'll humbly help us lord each one humbly to grow each one humbly to get our own walk right with you that we'll walk in your holiness and truth we'll be that set

apart people for your glory and lord we'll have loving and gentle rebuke where we need to but most of all help us with ourselves and our own selfish problems our own inclination to go astray lord help us to get right ourselves as the first thing so that then we can help others too help us as a church lord to have a clear gospel witness that we won't accommodate things that are not pleasing to you but rather we'll err on the side of being strong of being forthright of being clear with our testimony and witness lord help us especially on the personal level

[53:20] that we'll get the heart purity right that we'll be a people that will live godly and live soberly live righteously in the light of your coming lord to be a people ready for that blessed hope lord be glorified we pray in our hearts and lives in jesus name amen