

2 TIMOTHY 4:3, 4

TICKLE MY EARS, BUT DON'T SCRATCH MY HEART

“The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”¹

There is an old saying that is sometimes heard among Christians in the southern United States that cautions, “Scratch a saint and you find a sinner underneath.” This is one of those sayings that lends itself to various understandings. Unquestionably, it points out the fact that we are each sinful, though we may be saved. Even the bravest among us can be frightened and act cowardly. Even the boldest Christian can be intimidated into silence. The godliest individual is capable of tolerating and even justifying unthinkable evil.

At a more superficial level, this old saw addresses the fact that not everyone who professes to be a Christian acts “Christianly.” A church always represents a mixed multitude; growing together in God’s garden are wheat and weeds sown by the enemy. In any congregation there will be pretenders, and there will be sheep that are readily influenced to act unconscionably by the actions and pleas of others. Though we must guard against all such infiltration of evil, according to the words of the Master, it is inevitable that such will occur [see **MATTHEW 13:24-30**].

Nevertheless, these are perilous times for Christians. It is not dangerous for Canadians to go to church, nor even to be religious; however, to live a life of commitment to Christ—adhering to His Word and conscientiously endeavouring to do what pleases Him—exposes the child of God to serious risks in the world. Outsiders accuse the people of God of bigotry because they will not approve of the sinful lifestyle adopted by and tolerated in the world. Professed believers are offended because commitment to Christ makes them unpopular with the world. Even fellow believers who indisputably love the Master may become testy if pet doctrines are ignored.

Additionally, there is a constant struggle arising from within the Master’s congregations. At any given time, we will find saved individuals that “will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” Among the professed people of God, personal comfort is often of greater importance than is fidelity to the Word or conscientious commitment to the way in which Christ would have us walk. The sentiment is “Tickle my ears, but don’t scratch my heart.”

THE TENUOUS HOLD OF SOUND DOCTRINE — “The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching.” It is sometimes said that the Faith is but one generation from apostasy; I suggest that a congregation is always one sermon away from apostasy. After a congregation has become apostate, their defection is obvious to anyone with a modicum of spiritual perspicuity. However, when an assembly first begins to tolerate a little bit of error, it is difficult to say with certainty that the congregation is apostate. At first, the subtle deviations from sound doctrine are distractions—bothersome perhaps, but hardly worth rupturing fellowship. As the error becomes more blatant, we find we are uncertain when to pull the plug and leave the fellowship.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible, English Standard Version**, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The great English divine, Charles Spurgeon, struggled with that very issue in his associations with the Baptist Union of Great Britain. One of the major crises in his life was known as “the Downgrade Movement.” He remonstrated privately with leaders in the Baptist Union of Great Britain, pleading with them to remove pastors and teachers that openly denied the Faith. When that effort was rejected with the plea that they sought to maintain fellowship, he publicly quit the association. His church stood with him in withdrawing from association with error. After the breach was complete, he looked back and wrote, “I have taken a deep interest in the struggles of the orthodox brethren; but I have never advised those struggles, nor entertained the slightest hope of their success. My course has been of another kind. As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become firmly established, I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my one counsel has been, ‘Come ye out from among them.’”²

This battle is not new, it has continued since the earliest days of the Faith. Peter wrote of the saints who preceded him, “False prophets also arose among the people,” and he warned of what awaited those to whom he wrote, “just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them” [2 PETER 2:1]. Then, in agreement with our text he cautioned, “And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed” [2 PETER 2:2].

The elders are charged to be ever watchful against infiltration, but the error introduced and tolerated among otherwise sound people is excused because those who are led astray plead, “We know these men!” Paul warned the Ephesian elders who met him as he sailed to Jerusalem, “From among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them” [ACTS 20:30]. It would be some who had once stood firmly in the Faith and who had once taught the Word faithfully who would themselves lead the flock astray.

How is this possible? Spurgeon, in the previously cited Sword and Trowel article answered that very question. “Failure at a crucial moment may mar the entire outcome of a life. A man who has enjoyed special light is made bold to follow in the way of the Lord, and is anointed to guide others therein. He rises into a place of love and esteem among the godly, and this promotes his advancement among men. What then? The temptation comes to be careful of the position he has gained, and to do nothing to endanger it. The man, so lately a faithful man of God, compromises with worldlings, and to quiet his own conscience invents a theory by which such compromises are justified, and even commended. He receives the praises of ‘the judicious;’ he has, in truth, gone over to the enemy. The whole force of his former life now tells upon the wrong side. If the Lord loves him well enough, he will be scourged back to his place; but if not, he will grow more and more perverse, till he becomes a ringleader among the opposers of the gospel. To avoid such an end it becomes us ever to stand fast.”³

In short, a good man begins to love the praise of men, and in order to secure that praise he makes just a little compromise for the sake of “fellowship.” The members of the congregation are at first somewhat alarmed, but they know him to be a good man—they trust him; and so they dismiss his deviation as transient and momentary. However, they have made a fool’s bargain, exchanging the truth for a lie. Having tolerated “a little bit of error,” they will find it easier still to make the next compromise, though they cannot imagine that they will be required to make more accommodation for deception. Their conscience is quieted as the explanation is provided for why they can accept the error as truth and as God’s will.

²Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Attempts at the Impossible,” *The Sword and Trowel*, December 1888, http://www.spurgeon.org/s_and_t/dg12.htm, accessed 22 December 2009

³ Spurgeon, *ibid.*

Defection from the Faith is more widespread and more commonplace than we might ever imagine, for God has clearly warned that error will be introduced within the congregations of the Lord and even tolerated as the people of God grow quiescent and become spiritually senescent. Near the end of his ministry, the Apostle Paul warned, “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” [1 TIMOTHY 4:1]. Here is a frightening warning that has been issued by the Spirit of God. We saw earlier that even from among the elders some will arise who deceive, but here the Apostle says that from within the Faith there will be ongoing departures.

We know that a person who has been born from above cannot be unborn. These are not lost people who are in view, nor are they people who somehow became “unsaved;” rather, Paul is focusing on believers—members of the congregation, who reject the hardship of the Faith. Paul has in view redeemed individuals who turn from healthy teaching so that they can feed on the sweet sop that they want rather than the healthy foods that they need.

Listen to Eugene Peterson’s interpretation and translation of the Greek behind our text. “You’re going to find that there will be times when people will have no stomach for solid teaching, but will fill up on spiritual junk food—catchy opinions that tickle their fancy. They’ll turn their backs on truth and chase mirages.”⁴ The Apostle says we can anticipate that some believers will turn away from “healthy teaching.”⁵ They will prefer spiritual junk food because they cannot tolerate healthy food. This is an ongoing challenge to the teacher of the Word as he seeks to build the Body and strengthen believers. There will be constant resistance, as some supposedly spiritual individuals channelling Rodney King plead, “Can’t we all just get along?”

To be certain, there are deceivers who sneak into the assemblies and insinuate themselves into positions of prominence and authority. Jude warned against such people when he wrote, “Certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” [JUDE 4]. Certainly, that is the tenor of Peter’s previously cited warning. However, in our text, Paul seems to be warning that it is believers—people that have been born again and who should know better, who will seek to gorge themselves on spiritual junk food.

Because this is a constant danger, the people of God must guard against every deviation. Elders must “preach the message, be[ing] ready whether it is convenient or not” [2 TIMOTHY 4:1].⁶ Members of the congregation must familiarise themselves with the Word, ensuring that what is taught accords with the Word. Together, the people of God must hold one another accountable, refusing to permit errant teaching to slide. Though I recognise that in the popular view this passage is relegated to ordination sermons, the implication of the Apostle’s words is of such significance that all believers must take the teaching to heart. Each Christian must accept responsibility to ensure that this truth is applied consistently in the services of the congregation.

I understand that the Spirit of God guards the congregations of the Master. I understand that we have the Word of God delivered for our benefit and instruction. However, there is obviously a grave danger that believers will ignore sound doctrine, even tolerating speakers at the sacred desk who prove to be “liars whose consciences are seared” [see 1 TIMOTHY 4:2]; otherwise, the Spirit of God would not have appended the warnings which we have just seen, nor would it be necessary to caution those who preach the Word to guard their teaching, being prepared to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” [2 TIMOTHY 4:2].

⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, **The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language** (NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO 2002)

⁵ Roughly transliterated, the Greek *hugiainoúsēs didaskalías* is “hygienic didactics.”

⁶ **The NET Bible First Edition** (Biblical Studies Press, 2006)

Throughout Canada are multiplied empty church buildings that once housed congregations that stood firmly for the Faith of Christ the Lord. Those congregations defected from the truth and wandered off into myths. Now, the buildings built by these faithful saints stand empty or have been taken over by the world to serve as bars and barns. Who will listen very long to fables? Who can build their lives on fantasy and grow strong?

There are multiple denominations in our nation that were once identified as valiant for the Faith; yet, today within these same denominations one is hard-pressed to find a vibrant messenger of the Faith of Christ the Lord. The people imagined that the finest thoughts of mere mortals were superior to the revealed mind of God. They thought that tolerance of wickedness was pleasing in the sight of the Lord, and so they showed the breadth of their compassion through accommodating practises which are unacceptable to the Living God. We have come to a day in which gathering a crowd is more important than maintaining fidelity to the Word—the size of the crowd is taken as evidence of divine blessing. Whether a preacher is well liked in the community is of greater importance than whether that preacher boldly declares the whole counsel of God. Have such preachers never heard the Word of the Master, “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets” [LUKE 6:26]?

There is, in the prophecy of Isaiah, a startling description of the condition of God’s people when they insist on hearing what is pleasant rather than what is needful.

“They are a rebellious people,
 lying children,
 children unwilling to hear
 the instruction of the LORD;
 who say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’
 and to the prophets, ‘Do not prophesy to us what is right;
 speak to us smooth things,
 prophesy illusions,
 leave the way, turn aside from the path,
 let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.”

[ISAIAH 30:9-11]

There are consequences to such choices, as Isaiah makes clear in the verses that follow.

“Thus says the Holy One of Israel,
 ‘Because you despise this word
 and trust in oppression and perverseness
 and rely on them,
 therefore this iniquity shall be to you
 like a breach in a high wall, bulging out, and about to collapse,
 whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant;
 and its breaking is like that of a potter’s vessel
 that is smashed so ruthlessly
 that among its fragments not a shard is found
 with which to take fire from the hearth,
 or to dip up water out of the cistern.’”

[ISAIAH 30:12-14]

In his commentary on the Pastoral Letters, Knute Larson, long-time pastor of The Chapel in Akron, Ohio writes, “Nothing has changed. People still like to hear only pleasant things, teachings that correspond to their **own desires**. This allows them to continue in the lifestyles and practices with which they are comfortable. The human heart works hard to fortify itself against truth, creating rationalizations and systems of thought to justify selfishness. Unfortunately, there are teachers and leaders who give people what they want to hear, tickling their **itching ears** with curiosities that allow them to remain untouched by God’s transforming power. They turn **their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths—things devised by man**.

“God’s truth, in addition to pointing out error and sin, leads to reality, grace, and freedom. Truth becomes a burden only when we try to reach the beauty of its perfection without the enabling strength of our Creator. Truth, as delivered by God through his ministers and people, becomes the power for living in the fullness for which God created us. But human beings fear exposure, and so we pretend we can hide from the truth. In reality, we only deceive ourselves and lead others astray.”⁷

Long before Paul wrote to Timothy, Jeremiah spoke as a prophet of the Living God in a day of spiritual declension in the nation. His observation concerning the defection of God’s ancient people could readily be applied in this day as well.

“Something horrible and shocking
is going on in the land of Judah:
The prophets prophesy lies.
The priests exercise power by their own authority.
And my people love to have it this way.
But they will not be able to help you when the time of judgment comes!”⁸

[**JEREMIAH 5:30, 31**]

The prophets became concerned with how their message would be perceived, and so they moderated their prophecies in order to make them palatable and so that they would be liked by those who heard them. The priests did not want to make people uncomfortable by being overly strict about what was pleasing to the Lord, and so they changed the commands of God to ensure the comfort of the people. So liturgy and pomp was substituted for contrition and humility. Terrible though Jeremiah’s assessment concerning the religious leaders is, the most appalling statement is undoubtedly, “My people love to have it this way.” A congregation will go no lower than is permitted by the people. If the people permit error to dictate their service, they must ultimately bear culpability, though the false teachers are not excused.

Let me say very plainly that it is a common condition of mankind, and thus a common infection within the people of God, to exchange vigilance for complacency, to barter peace and security for disengagement and ambiguity, to trade freedom for bondage. We grow weary, and because we are tired we withdraw from watching against evil. After a while we choose to ignore the tiny errors that we see creeping in, treating them like termites that though we know they are destructive, so long as they are out of sight we are not disturbed—and being undisturbed is of greater importance than being compelled to deal with the danger that threatens our existence.

⁷ Knute Larson, **Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon** (Broadman and Holman, Nashville, TN 2000) 320

⁸ **The NET Bible First Edition** (Biblical Studies Press, 1996-2006)

THE BASIS FOR RESISTANCE TO SOUND DOCTRINE — “Having itching ears [Christians] will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.” Notice that the Apostle turns the focus to the congregations. Though tolerance and complacency have been a constant danger to the churches of our Lord throughout this Age of Grace, there is no question but that this prophetic word looks forward to the acceleration of this dreadful condition as the end of this present age draws to a conclusion. Rather than being fed by shepherds appointed by God, the congregations will hire whomever they please so that they can hear what they want to hear. They will not tolerate strong meat, insisting rather that they need spiritual pabulum consisting of moralistic platitudes rather than being compelled to confront the message of the Master.

There looms in the future an awful day marked by widespread longing to hear the Word of the Lord. Amos spoke of that awful day when he wrote:

“Behold, the days are coming,’ declares the Lord GOD,
 ‘when I will send a famine on the land—
 not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
 but of hearing the words of the LORD.
 They shall wander from sea to sea,
 and from north to east;
 they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD,
 but they shall not find it.”

[AMOS 8:11, 12]

The reason the Word of the LORD will not be found is because the “seekers” will have accumulated for themselves teachers to say what they want to hear.

From July, 2002 to March 2003, the research team of Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton representing the National Survey of Youth and Religion conducted 3,290 telephone interviews followed by 267 in-depth interviews with selected participants from the earlier surveys. They sought to discover the religious tenor of American teenagers. What they discovered should be disquieting to every thoughtful Christian. According to the authors, American teenagers, and likely Canadian teens as well, “may actually serve as a very accurate barometer of the condition of the culture and institutions of our larger society... American teenagers actually well reflect back to us the best and worst of our own adult condition and culture.” What did these researchers find that applies to what we are studying in this hour.

Their findings were summarised in a book that shook the religious world in 2005.⁹ Their conclusion was that the religion of modern teenagers immersed in the culture of church is best defined as “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” According to this research duo, modern teens that are active in a church could summarise their beliefs as:

- a rather distant (unless needed to solve one's problems) God, who “wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions” (p. 162);
- “the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself” (p. 163);
- “good people go to heaven when they die” (p. 163);

⁹ Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, **Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers** (Oxford University Press, New York, 2005)

- God “designed the universe and establishes moral law and order. But this God is not Trinitarian, he did not speak through the Torah or the prophets of Israel, was never resurrected from the dead, and does not fill and transform people thorough his Spirit. This God is not demanding. He actually can't be, because his job is to solve our problems and make people feel good. In short, God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he is always on call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps his people feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process” (p. 165).¹⁰

“What we heard from most teens,” Smith and Denton say, “is essentially that religion makes them feel good, that it helps them make good choices, that it helps resolve problems and troubles, that it serves their felt needs. What we hardly ever heard from teens was that religion is about significantly transforming people into, not what they feel like being, but what they are supposed to be, what God, or their ethical tradition wants them to be” (pp. 148-149). The youngsters interviewed rarely expressed interest in a religion that “summons people to embrace an obedience to truth regardless of the personal consequences or rewards. Hardly any teens spoke directly about more difficult religious subjects like repentance, love of neighbour, social justice, unmerited grace, self-discipline, humility, the costs of discipleship, dying to self, the sovereignty of God, personal holiness, the struggles of sanctification” (p. 149), or any of the classical themes of Christian discipleship.”

Because their search is for something to make them feel good about themselves, they are uncomfortable hearing the teaching of the Word. Parents want their teens to “be in church,” and so the parents are offended if the preacher should speak pointedly about the biblical requirements for godliness, righteousness and ethical behaviour. Thus, the religious leaders seek to create a religion that will not make anyone uncomfortable, and that will make people feel good about themselves. This is precisely the condition the Apostle foresaw.

It is doubtful that the religion of the modern American teenagers differs significantly from the religious preferences of their Canadian peers. What is presented is a hodgepodge of banal, self-serving, feel-good beliefs that bears little resemblance to traditional Christianity. Rather than condemning teenagers, I suggest that our youth actually serve as quite an accurate barometer of the condition of the culture and institutions of our larger society. I suggest that our teenagers actually reflect back to us the cultural condition prevailing in the nation.

REJECTING SOUND TEACHING — Christians “will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” To be certain, we who stand behind the sacred desk are responsible for what we teach. If the Christians seated before us are poorly taught, we bear responsibility since we are accountable to God for what we teach. False teachers and weak teachers will speak for a fee, saying whatever they are paid to say. However, in our text, Paul lays responsibility for the absence of sound doctrine at the feet of professed believers who are unwilling to break free from their old life, giving themselves fully to the new. These wanna' be Christians grow dissatisfied with the message of life because it is too demanding of them; so they seek a “spiritual answer” that is more convenient. Convenience and personal satisfaction drives their search.

¹⁰ Notes on books by Gerald Reed, “Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers,” 04/25/2006, http://reedings.com/soul_searching, accessed 26 December 2009; Scott Korb, “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism,” 7 April, 2005, The Revealer, http://www.therevealer.org/archives/timeless_001837.php, accessed 26 December 2009

The pious façade that adorns the exterior of many of the professed saints of God is no indication of character. Character is the expression of what lies inside; and the inner man is fortified by the Spirit of God. The Christian that is energised by the Spirit of God seeks truth and gladly embraces the truth though it stings because it condemns unrighteousness and ungodliness; the Christian knows that the truth of God is necessary if he will be godly and strong in the Faith. Those professed Christians who have surrendered to worldly values and sinful desires of various sorts have exchanged the demands of the Word for immediate convenience and personal comfort. Having embraced the values of this dying world, it is the very thing they have embraced that determines what type of teaching they will tolerate.

This is a vital point that must not be overlooked. Those whom Paul describes as deceived have deceived themselves. For having adopted the values and desires associated with this dying world, they no longer are capable of deciding what is healthy; now, they are at the mercy of their own desires which drain them of spiritual energy and renders them ineffectual in their Christian walk. What was then ongoing within the church at Ephesus is seen prophetically—the condition will continue throughout the age, growing more pronounced as the age draws to a conclusion, until during the Tribulation the apostate faith that will then remain on the earth will have no possibility of presenting what is right and healthy.

It is especially tragic that false teachers, perhaps even imagining that they are doing the work of God, will prove only too ready to provide a satisfying alternative to the healthy doctrine that Paul describes. The Apostle identifies these alternatives as “myths” in contrast to the truth of apostolic doctrine. This has been a constant theme throughout the Pastoral Letters. Consider just a few instances. As he opens the first letter to Timothy, Paul writes, “As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith” [1 TIMOTHY 1:3, 4]. Later in the same letter he warns, “Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness” [1 TIMOTHY 4:7].

The theme of myths supplanting truth is prominent in Paul’s Letter to Titus when he instructs Titus, “Rebuke [insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers] sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work” [TITUS 1:13-16].

The theme is echoed by Peter who says of the message he presented together with the other Apostles, “We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” [2 PETER 1:16].

Fix firmly in your mind the truth that though “there will be false teachers among [the churches], who will secretly bring in destructive heresies” [see 2 PETER 2:1], these enervating doctrines would never find a place among the churches if the people were not disposed to and insistent on “turn[ing] away from the truth and wander[ing] off into myths.” The healthy doctrine that Paul presented and which is necessary for strong saints, points all to Christ. There is no controversy in this teaching. On the other hand, the myths that false teachers bring and that the people will increasingly demand created “an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth” [1 TIMOTHY 6:4].

I want to take one moment longer to speak of the means for guarding against error such as described by the Apostle. First, each member of the Body is responsible to make himself or herself familiar with the Word and the will of God—this is a shared responsibility. Each Christian must ruthlessly reject the temptation to seek what makes him or her comfortable, seeking rather to ensure that the things taught are the will of God. Again, each Christian must accept the responsibility to ensure that what is taught in the congregation accords with sound doctrine. Each of us is responsible to humbly accept the implanted Word which is able to save the soul. Avoid argument; rather examining what is taught to ensure that it agrees with the revealed Word which has been delivered for our benefit.

We must remove from our mind any thought that the congregation is a hierarchy—there are no classes of saints. In the assembly there are only “saints” and “ain’ts.” Either we are redeemed, or we are lost. There are elders appointed by God, but they are members of the congregation. Pastors are not hired; they are supported so they can give their full attention to the ministry of the Word. Every member is a minister—a servant performing the tasks which the Master, the Head of the Church, has assigned. When we truly understand this truth we will see the assembly as the Body of Christ, reflecting the presence of the Living God at work through His redeemed people.

Where has the Master placed you? You are not a member of the church, though your name may appear on a church roll, if you have not been born from above. Your first need is to be saved, through faith in the Risen, Reigning Son of God. Christ died because of our sin and rose from the dead so that we might be right with God. Therefore, the Word of God invites all people to faith in this Living Son of God.

The Word is very clear in stating, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” That passage then cites the words of the Prophet Joel, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” [**ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13**].

Our sincere prayer is that you have this faith that saves. If you do, we urge you to seek out a congregation where the sound doctrine of the Word is proclaimed that you might grow and that you might fulfil the service to which the Master has appointed you. Make that decision today. God bless you as you seek His will. Amen.