



The Good News

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Dangers facing the flock today

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In **Acts 20:28-32** Paul addresses the Ephesian elders and warns them about dangers from two sources: within among the brethren, and without among those from the outside. He encourages them to watch and protect the flock that Christ purchased. We want to ask the question, what dangers does the church face today?

Becoming satisfied - When we see or hear the word “satisfied” we often assume that one is speaking of being satisfied with the material blessings we have. While that can certainly be true, there is another form of satisfaction that we should not have, and that is to be satisfied with our spiritual knowledge and status. There is a very real danger for every one of us to become too comfortable by simply deciding we no longer need to grow or learn. We are not yet openly persecuted in this country, and this is good if we allow it to be good. Unfortunately, many Christians may not stand when persecution does, inevitably, come and we must prepare now for the time when our safe environment may no longer be attainable. In addition, we must always be willing to hear the truth, no matter how much it may step on our toes. One test to tell if we are too comfortable with our state spiritually is if we hear something said in class or the sermon that directly applies to our lives. If we become defensive and upset over it, we may need to take an inventory of our comfort level; is what was said true? Was the Scripture applicable? If so, why am I upset? These are the questions we must ask ourselves when this occurs.

Apathy – This was a problem in the church at Laodicea as they had become “lukewarm” in their attitudes and actions. In **Rev. 3:14-22** Jesus says that He will “spew them” out of His mouth because they were neither cold nor hot. One application from this is that their lack of zeal made Him sick. It is important to realize that we must always be zealous for God’s word and its application in our lives. However, this zeal must be tempered with knowledge. In **Rom. 10:2** we

find that Israel did indeed have a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge and so they went about trying to establish their own righteousness. We as individuals must guard against this as well, as there are those Christians who will try to establish their own standards, insisting on directives and standards that are not found in Scripture. In addition, we cannot allow ourselves to become apathetic towards sin. When we find that we, or one of our brethren, are in sin we must act. We cannot pretend not to care, nor can we simply “conscientiously object”. We must do something about it.

Sympathy – Just as much as apathy is a danger, so also is sympathy toward sin. Even more dangerous is that the two can go hand in hand, not caring about the sin, but rather caring and sympathizing with the sinner so much that the sin no longer registers. This is a great danger to brethren as many of our friends and loved ones succumb to sin. We can be pulled in through sob stories and “they-did-me-wrong” stories to the point that we begin to compromise Scripture because “it’s just not fair”. However, we are reminded to not allow these events to change our stand in the truth of God’s word. Jesus commends the church at Ephesus in **Rev. 2:2** because they could not “bear with those who are evil”, nor could they tolerate false teaching. This same attitude needs to be in us as well.

These are only three dangers that the church, and we as Christians, face. Let us understand that we must guard our souls and the souls of our brethren with passion, zeal, and the knowledge of God’s word lest we fall into the traps that Satan sets.