

Series: Ephesians
Title: Kept From the Evil
Text: Ephesians 4: 14
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We have seen that when Christ Jesus ascended, he began giving his preachers: **Ephesians 4: 11: And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;**

We looked at the general reason why Christ gave his preachers—**Ephesians 4: 12: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:**--perfecting means resetting of dislocated bones—we are the dry bones dislocated from Christ in the garden, reset by the gospel, in Christ in whom we are perfect.

We saw how long Christ shall give his preachers—**Ephesians 4: 13: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:**--Christ shall send his preachers till each elect, redeemed member of his body is called into the unity of the faith, unto the knowledge of the Son of God—then Christ's body will be full.

Here is our text. It gives us one more reasons why Christ sends his preachers--**Ephesians 4: 14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;**

Proposition: Christ gives his preachers to save his people from false preachers.

Title: Kept from the Evil

John 17: 15: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17: Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

I. WHEN BORN-AGAIN BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD WE ARE NEW BORN BABIES, CHILDREN IN UNDERSTANDING AND STRENGTH.

Christ feeds us with the gospel, making us grow inwardly—for this purpose—v**14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;**

This metaphor is of ship tossed at sea. But through the gospel, Christ makes his child,

Hebrews 6: 18: ...lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19: Which hope we have as **an anchor of the soul**, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20: Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Christ sends his true preachers to grow us and save us from false preachers and their false doctrines.

Have you noticed in the scriptures, God always describes false preachers the way he does in our text?

- As using sleight of hand, cunning craftiness,
- As lying in wait to deceive.

These descriptions partly describe the false preacher's way of commending himself as a true preacher.

Scriptures give three things that false preachers do to convince men they are sent of God: 1) they commend themselves BY themselves: by their education, scholastic achievements, letters of recommendation from men, and so on 2) Secondly, they commend themselves, to the carnal, fleshly appetites of sinners: preaching man's will, preaching morality, taking the offense out of the cross, using inventive means and programs, and so on. 3) Thirdly, they commend themselves as in the sight of men, they do all to be seen of men, to please men, to gain the favor of men.

II. NOW LET'S LEARN ABOUT CHRIST'S TRUE PREACHER IN 2 CORNINTHIANS 2 WHERE WE SEE HOW GOD SAYS HIS TRUE PREACHERS COMMEND THEMSELVES AS TRUE CHRIST-SENT PREACHERS—2 Corinthians 2: 14: Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. [God does it] 15: For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17: For [here is the reason Christ's preacher is a sweet savor unto God] for we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity,

Christ's preachers do not preach our word, we preach God's word; we do not try to make the word of God say what it does not say; we preach the word of God as it is; we preach the word clearly, faithful to God who sent us, faithful to the souls of eternity bound men and women; we preach total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, preservation and perseverance of the saints—as of sincerity

2 Corinthians 2: 17: but as of God,

We preach the word as the word of God giving God all the glory and man none, as those called of God, as those taught of God, as men sent of God, as men speaking by the power of God.

2 Corinthians 2: 17: in the sight of God

Christ's preacher is not concerned about being seen of men or of pleasing men but he preaches as in the very presence of God. We seek God's favor not men's favor.

2 Corinthians 2: 17: speak we in Christ.

We preach Christ and him crucified; we give Christ all Preeminence; we declare Christ the Prophet, Priest and King of his people; we declare Christ the sovereign, successful Savior who accomplished the redemption of his people; we are in Christ, sent by Christ, speaking by Christ, speaking only of Christ—not in some messages now and then but in every message we preach.

2 Corinthians 3: 1: Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? 2: Ye are our epistle written in [your] hearts, known and read of all men: 3: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. 4: And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

The commendation of Christ's preacher to Christ's people is nothing else but the truth written on your hearts by Christ himself, written with the Spirit of the living God, written in the heart made new by God. We look to no other means to persuade sinners to believe Christ or to keep you continuing. We look to God alone to do this work through Christ Jesus—such trust have we through Christ to God-ward.

2 Corinthians 3: 5: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

We ascribe none of the results to ourselves. We have no sufficiency of ourselves for any aspect of this work: no sufficiency to change God's ordained means, so we preach; no sufficiency to speak anything but God's Word, so we preach Christ the Word; no sufficiency to deliver the message ourselves, so we depend upon Christ; no sufficiency to make God's word effectual ourselves, so we wait on Christ. Our sufficiency is of God!

2 Corinthians 3: 6: Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life....

Christ sends preachers who Christ has first called by his great power, through the preaching of everlasting covenant of grace, so that having experienced God's power, Christ's preachers only preach that which we have seen and heard and experienced in our own hearts. We know preaching the letter—preaching the law—only kills—preaching do's and don'ts—never gives life—the law is the ministration of death! But preaching the spirit—the gospel of God's grace—is the means whereby God gives spiritual life. We know this because we have been given spiritual life through the preaching of the gospel!

A man cannot preach what he does not know! A man cannot depend upon Power which he has not been conquered by himself! Christ's preacher declares every man a sinner with no ability to discern things of God, because Christ has taught us this about our own selves and saved us from our own selves. Christ's preachers preach the gospel of God's grace—the works which God performs—and we wait on God to quicken, call and grow his child through that gospel because we ourselves have been quickened, called and grown through that gospel.

2 Corinthians 3: 12: Seeing then that WE HAVE such hope, we use great plainness of speech:...

Seeing we know by experience that the Spirit giveth life, seeing we know by experience that God gives life through the gospel, not by the preaching of law and works, seeing we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. Christ's preacher knows by experience, that

2 Corinthians 3: 15:...even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

When the letter of the law is preached, when men are turned to themselves, to their law-keeping, God gives no life and no discernment—the vail is upon their heart.

2 Corinthians 3: 16: Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

This is why we preach Christ. Christ is the Light. Christ alone can take away the vail over the heart and give spiritual light to dead sinners

2 Corinthians 3: 17: Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

The Lord alone is that Spirit who takes away the vail on the heart. The Spirit of the Lord alone can give liberty from the chains of spiritual darkness. The Lord makes us see him openly through faith, through the gospel

2 Corinthians 3: 18: But we all,...

This is true of the preacher as well as those to whom we preach; this is not by making men see us—but by declaring the glory of the Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3: 18: But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Seeing as how Christ's preacher has received mercy ourselves this one way, seeing as how we have been made ministers of the gospel this one way, as we have received mercy from God ourselves through this one gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ

2 Corinthians 4: 1: Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

As we have received mercy ourselves—through the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ Jesus—so we faint not to declare the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ Jesus. And we wait on God to work the work in the hearts of his people the same way he did in ours.

2 Corinthians 4: 2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully;

All the hidden, dishonest, crafty, deceitful ways that men commend themselves as preachers—Christ’s true preacher has renounced.

2 Corinthians 4: 2: But...

Be sure to get this. This is the difference between the false preacher and the true. Christ’s true preacher commends himself as a true preacher these three ways:

1) 2 Corinthians 4: 2: by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves

The false preacher commends himself by himself: by his credentials, by letters of commendation from others and so on. God’s true preacher proves he is sent of Christ simply by preaching the truth

2) Secondly, God’s true preacher proves he is true by preaching the truth...2 Corinthians 4: 2:...to every man’s conscience

We trust God to make the truth manifest in the conscience purged by Christ’s blood. False preachers appeal to the carnal, fleshly appetite but God’s true preacher trusts God to reveal the gospel in the heart of his people.

3) Thirdly, God preacher commends himself as true---preaching the gospel in truth--as 2 Corinthians 4: 2: in the sight of God.

The false preacher seeks to be seen of men and to please men. The true Christ-sent preacher preaches, not to please men, but in the sight of God, to please our Lord whom we serve.

Galatians 1:10: For do I now persuade men, [do I seek men’s favor] or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

So read verse 2 again, every Christ-sent preacher has “renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” He finishes this thought in verse 5-7:

2 Corinthians 3: 5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

And those who reject Christ’s true preacher reject Christ who is our Gospel. He says that back in verses 3 & 4.

2 Corinthians 3: 3: But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So this is the difference between a false preacher and Christ's true preacher; this is the reason Christ gives his true preacher.

Ephesians 4: 14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Christ shall not fail, till he hath set judgment in the earth. His name is Jesus for he shall save his people from our sins, even from every false way. So brethren, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We need the gospel in truth because we need Christ who is our Gospel, who writes his gospel in our hearts and keeps us from every false way!

Amen!