

Beware of Lawlessness - Part 2

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon warns of the dangers of the spirit of lawlessness and the seducing spirit, and emphasizes the importance of being aware of the enemy's schemes and of preaching the word of God.

Duration: 43:04

Scripture: Deuteronomy 12:29

Topics: "Lawlessness", "The Authority of Scripture"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. warns against the spirit of lawlessness, emphasizing the importance of adhering to God's Word and recognizing the subtle ways in which temptation can lead believers away from Christ. He draws parallels between the warnings given to Israel in Deuteronomy and the New Testament teachings, highlighting the need for vigilance against false prophets and teachings that may appear righteous but ultimately divert attention from the truth of Scripture. The sermon stresses the believer's identity in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin, urging Christians to remain steadfast in their faith and to prioritize the Word of God in their lives.

Transcript

...at tonight, and we're going to just have to see how far we can get. But I want to encourage you to please open up your Bibles if you have them, and what we're going to do is we're going to carry through, carry on, continue the same basic message that we started Sunday morning when we preached on beware of the spirit of lawlessness. Beware of the spirit of lawlessness.

We're going to go back to the Word of God and gain understanding. First of all, I'd like to direct your attention to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 12. Deuteronomy chapter 12, verse number 29.

What we like to do is look into the words that God spoke through Moses to Israel, warning them of the necessity of destroying all the idols that were in the land of Canaan which God had promised to give them. And it is my opinion that we can gain some very helpful and practical and instructional teaching from the Word of God tonight. Verse number 29, Deuteronomy chapter 12.

When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land, take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them. After that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God,

for every abomination to the Lord which he hateth have they done unto their gods.

For even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it, that thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. Verses 29 through 32 reflect the desire within the Lord's heart regarding the absolute need for us as God's people, because we are God's people in this hour of grace that we live in.

It is essential for us to recognize that though we have experienced the perfect redemption through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and just as God, according to the Bible here, cut off the nations, in other words, He broke the power of the nations in the presence of Israel. Well, this is a message that can be seen and fulfilled in Christ Himself. For we understand that in the book of Colossians, Colossians, you could turn there if you like, the book of Colossians in the New Testament, Colossians 2, verse 13, And you, Colossians 2, verse 13, And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.

Now notice verse number 15, And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. So through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ has triumphed and has overcome and has canceled the power of sin and the power of the world over the believer. He has canceled it.

He has broken it. See, it's very important for us to understand, as we have been over the past year, it's very important for us to understand our hopelessness and helplessness as people apart from the Lord. And it is essential for us to gain this understanding, that we are powerless, that we can do nothing.

However, once the Lord firmly and clearly makes you to see your total powerlessness before Him, as a Christian, He wants to bring you into another stage where not only do you see your powerlessness apart from Him, but you see your identity in Him as one that is actually in union with and attached to the very Christ life Himself that is in you through the Holy Spirit. And when you understand that part of your identity, not only then do you recognize, oh, my flesh is sinful and I need to be careful, amen. You need to recognize that your flesh is sinful.

But on the other hand, you need to see and understand that in your spirit dwells the very living God Himself. There to give you an unlimited resource of resurrection power. To cause you to rise up above what you are as flesh and walk in what you are as a redeemed child of God.

You have been made to sit down together with Christ in heavenly places and the very victory that Christ possesses, He has imputed into your spirit through the person of the Holy Spirit. Though the tormenting, molesting power of sin yet works within your flesh, there is a resurrecting power that works within your spirit. And the Bible says, that is in you than the flesh, the devil, and the world.

So consequently, when we read here that God, in verse 29 of Deuteronomy chapter 12, God drove out the enemies. He dispossessed them from the land. But then in verse 30, He said, Be not snared by following.

So even though God dispossessed the nations and drove them out, yet Israel had to be careful that they didn't follow the ways of the ungodly nations. And this is indeed what the Holy Spirit is saying to us today. Now, I want to just continue reading in verse number 1 of Deuteronomy chapter 13.

And we want to develop here just a little bit the nature and the character of sin and temptation and see how it comes to us. Believe it or not, beloved, the enemy, your flesh, the powers that are in the world, all of the manipulation that's going on in the world is intended to accomplish one thing alone. And if this one thing is accomplished, hell will be happy and heaven will be sad.

And here's what the purpose of temptation is as far as the devil's perspective is concerned. Chapter 13, verse 1. If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass. Now, let's stop right there.

The Bible says in Corinthians, we should turn to it. 1 Corinthians. This is so very important.

1 Corinthians, it slipped my mind. The angel of light. Satan himself appears as an angel of light and his ministers as ministers of righteousness.

If somebody finds it, just shout it out and then we can read it. I'm not sure. I thought it was 1 Corinthians, but... Okay, 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

2 Corinthians chapter 11. Now, in context, we must recognize that Paul is specifically talking about charlatan preachers. He's talking about preachers who wanted to get rich by stealing from the Corinthian believers.

And in context, 2 Corinthians chapter 11, beginning in verse number 13, for such are false apostles. That is, in context, those who are abusing the Corinthians, they were taking advantage of the Corinthians, they were draining them financially, they were not living a life that was pleasing to God. And the problem with the Corinthians was they were just allowing it to happen instead of coming against it.

And Paul says, for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.

So, here we see that Satan will transform himself as an angel of light, and he has ministers who appear as ministers of righteousness. Now, I said that in order to find a New Testament part to what we're reading in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy chapter 13, beginning in verse 1. If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and give it the sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass. So, we're not looking at a false prophet necessarily as one who predicts something and it doesn't happen.

We're looking at somebody who predicts something and it happens. So, the ultimate test as to whether or not something is from God or not is not whether or not there is a prediction and it happens. Let's read on.

Verse 2, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them. Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

So, we see here that one of the characteristics and one of the aspects of sin and temptation and getting away from the Lord is it can even come in a way through a false prophet to where there could be an element of supernatural in it. There could be an element of a prediction, but it can come to pass. But the ultimate test is this, what is the consequence or the result of believing or following this sign? Listen, is it

drawing your heart away from the Word of God or is it drawing your heart closer to the Word of God? That's the key right there.

Is it drawing your heart away from the Word of God or is it drawing you away, closer to the Word of God? There's much today going on with the miraculous and with so-called signs and wonders, but the very, very important thing that we need to remember as believers is it's not the element of, well, things are coming to pass and things are happening, but it's what is the ultimate overtone? What is the message? Is the message drawing you closer to the Lord, closer to obeying the Word of God? Or is there a lot of excitement, a lot of emotionalism going on, some signs and wonders, but there's an inward drifting from the Word of God, an inward pulling away from God, away from obeying the Lord Jesus Christ, away from brokenness, away from contriteness, away from living in a state of repentance toward God. That's the test right there. Verse 4, Ye shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him and cleave unto Him.

Beloved, beware of anything that comes to you and excites your interest and stirs up your curiosity and might even appear to be working in a supernatural way. I don't know whether it be through a dream, through a teaching, through a prophet, through some ministry. Beware of anything.

If after you watch it and study it and discover something of it, you find that deep within, the real overall pull in your life is away from the Word of God and an allegiance from the Lord Jesus Christ, beware of anything that will begin to take you from the Lordship of Jesus Christ, because that's the ultimate intention of the enemy. The ultimate intention of the enemy. Verse 5, And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in.

So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. Beloved, anything in your life, anything that is thrusting you away from the way which the Lord has commanded us to walk in the Holy Scriptures, pray and ask God to destroy that influence in your life, whatever it is. Whatever it is.

Now this coincides with what we ministered on Sunday morning. Beware of lawlessness. Beware of lawlessness.

Now I want to direct your attention, if we could, to 2 Timothy or 2 Thessalonians as we were in Sunday morning. And we want to remind you that the Apostle Paul was encouraging the believers not to be soon troubled or shaken, verse 2, in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first.

And that the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or all that is worshipped, so that he is as God sitting in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that when I was with you I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work.

Only he who now restrains it will until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan.

Now notice the similarity between the warning in Deuteronomy 12-13 and 2 Thessalonians 2 9-11. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. Now see, the power and the signs and the lying wonders are intended to get the heart, are intended to win the audience.

And once something has got your heart, once something has got into you and has won your affection, and I say once something, I should rather say once the devil does that, the immediate job that he begins to work in you is slowly pulling you away from the Word of God. Slowly pulling your heart away from recognizing that the Word of God is the final authority. And Jesus said, if you love me you'll keep my commandments.

So if I'm loving the Lord more and more in my Christian life, then I'm finding myself living in obedience to God's Word more and more. So the pattern is, a false prophet, a dreamer, a sign worker, a wonder worker, anything that comes, gets your excitement, appeals, usually these things appeal to ego. How to get rich quick, how to use God to prosper, how to follow these certain steps and you can be a winner in the kingdom of God.

All of these subtle, sneaky, perverted, out of context ways of preaching and teaching has stolen a whole generation of believers. And what it has done, it has stolen the hearts. And usually the way evil works is immediately it doesn't introduce its real self.

It doesn't introduce what it really is. It waits. It makes friends with those that it's got.

And then after it's sure, after it's confident that it's got your mind and it's got your heart, then it begins to slowly and subtly take your affection from Christ, the word of God, and the ongoing pursuit to be holy and righteous and not to touch any unclean thing and to walk humbly and softly before the Lord your God. It takes you from that mentality and begins to put you on a road where you're finding that you want to use God in order to gain something for yourself. You want to gain something for yourself that has nothing to do with the purposes of God, has nothing to do with the heart of Jesus in this hour.

It's very sneaky, very subtle. It's in the world already, but the Spirit is seducing the church. But the devil's smart.

He uses the Scriptures to do it. He doesn't come and not mention the name of Jesus and not mention the Bible. No, he comes using the Bible, using Jesus.

He introduces Jesus as a man who walked around with the most expensive clothes that you could buy. So don't you think God wants you to have the best clothes in the world? Jesus wore them. Oh, my.

This is how the devil works. But not just in that way where we see false doctrines and false messages, but he works like this in any area of your life. Whatever is usurping the place of Christ in your life, whatever is slowly hardening your heart, you've got to beware of.

It might not even be evil in itself, but you can't allow it to turn you from the Lord Jesus Christ. You can't allow it to turn you from the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Bible says that in verse number 10 of 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. Now, of course, this

specifically in context, you never want to take it out of context. It's speaking about the final judgment which will come upon all those who have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, we have to remember that the spirit of Antichrist is already in the world. It was in the world during John's time. He even said it in his little epistle, 1 John chapter 4. There are many Antichrists, he said.

So beloved, understand and recognize that as a redeemed child of God, as one who has been saved and chosen of God and sanctified and washed in the blood, your greatest enemy is going to be that spirit that is now in the world that is gaining more and more control of the world in order to turn men away from God so that the devil can get their worship and their affection. This is the spirit that wants to seduce the church. And there's only one way, and we went into this very extensively Sunday morning, there's only one way that the Christian can be free from this seducing spirit, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul said, thanks be unto God that Christ always causes us to triumph. Our hope, our victory, and our safety is Christ Himself abiding in Christ. Second Timothy, the word of God is precious.

Second Timothy, chapter 4. I charge thee therefore before God. The word charge, it's interesting to note, is a military word. It is as if a military, what would you call it? A sergeant would be someone that is over a group of men in the military.

A sergeant, someone like that. It would be as if a sergeant was speaking to his soldier, and he would be saying, I charge thee, I command thee. This is a military command.

I charge thee therefore before God. Now, it is in light of the evil. Chapter 3, verses 10 through 17 is the context.

Because of the evil, Paul said, and evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. There's going to be a falling away.

Paul was warning them, and that's where he comes into chapter 4. I charge thee therefore in light of this coming seduction that's already beginning to occur. I charge thee before the Lord Jesus Christ. He shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.

Preach the word. Now, there you go. The word of God.

One of the characteristics of any kind of a molesting spirit that will come to you. It doesn't matter if it's a religious spirit. It doesn't matter if it's coming from the pulpit.

Most pulpits today are under the influence of seducing spirits. They are not bringing people down on their knees before the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather they are promising the people all kinds of things that can't be grounded in the word of God. One of the characteristics of a seducing spirit, any kind of a sin in your life, whether it comes in the form of a false doctrine, whether it comes in the form of an evil thinking pattern, or maybe it's a behavior sin.

It always takes you from the word of God. That is, takes you from obeying the word of God. You can be a hearer and not a doer and be deceived.

So, the ultimate purpose of something that's false. Now, next time we get together, we're going to, God willing, next time we get together and we feel liberty to go back into this subject, we're going to go into 2 Peter chapter 2, and we're going to go through the list and show you the specific characteristic of the false prophet ministry of this hour that we're living. And we're going to go right down the list and identify each characteristic so that we can be on our guard as Christians.

But Paul said, So preach the word. Preach the word. Beloved, the word of God is fire.

As the word of God gets in your soul, it's not preaching about the word. It's not sermonizing about the word. It is the word of God.

Beloved, don't despair when you see your utter powerlessness. Don't despair when you see that within yourself you cannot overcome. Be encouraged that God is showing you how weak you are, but don't just stay in that state of weakness.

Get in and devour the word. Because as the word gets in your soul, you'll find the power will be in the word of God. Oh, the word of God is quick and powerful.

It's the word of God in your soul that rises up and gives you power over sin. Thy word have I heeded in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. By thy word I have been instructed.

By thy word I understand righteousness. By thy word, O Lord, I have been comforted. By thy word, O God, I have risen above mine enemies and have overcome the strongholds in my life.

By thy word. The false ministry, the false prophet, the false teacher, the false apostle, the false ministry is not bringing people to the pure, unadulterated word of God, but is leading them astray. Where Jesus Christ is not the central affection, but all kinds of things.

Preach the word. Be instant, in season, out of season. Reprove.

Now, let me explain a little bit about this. Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. The only authority that we have to reprove someone is the authority that comes from the word.

In other words, if the word of God reproves you, so be it. It's the word that reproves. It's the word that exhorts.

It's the word that instructs. If I preach the word, then I will rebuke those who will be rebuked by the word. But that same word might encourage someone else.

So when you look at this, reprove and rebuke, don't look at it as an arbitrary act independent of the word of God. Like, well, I have the right to rebuke somebody. No, you don't.

The word of God has the right to rebuke someone. The word of God is the final authority. And as your life is filled with the word of God, and as the word of God is being lived in you and through you, and people hear it coming out of your mouth, and they see it living in your life, then you will reprove.

You will rebuke. You will encourage. You will instruct the whole world.

But it's not you. It's that word of God living in you. Then you don't have to worry because it's not you.

It's the word in you. Here it is, verse 3. This is the day we're living in. For the time will come when they, who's they? Chapter 3, verse 13.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. So verse number 3, chapter 4, is referring back to chapter 3 when Paul was warning Timothy about the coming seduction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

Now, to endure, the Greek word for endure is to hold up with, to put up with. So you know what the Bible's saying here? There's going to come a time when people are just not going to put up with the word of God. Because what is sound doctrine? What is sound doctrine? Sound doctrine is it is written.

Sound doctrine is the counsel of God's word. And that's what people will not put up with. They will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts.

Okay, we're learning something here. When a person decides that they're not going to put up with sound doctrine anymore, they have something in mind. Guess what it is? Their own desires.

In other words, when the word of God opposes your desires, you end up in the valley of decision. You have to make a choice. You have to say, am I going to allow the word of God to be sovereign in my life and put down my desires? Or am I going to esteem my desires higher than the word of God and not put up with the word of God? That's the crisis that we come into as believers.

They shall not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. Now watch this. You've got a setting here where the word of God is no longer tolerated, my desires are more important to me, so I find myself surrounded by that which is telling me what I want to hear rather than telling me what God's word says.

And such a condition results, verse 4, a turning away their ears from the truth and they shall be turned unto fables. Now again, this specifically is referring to the turning away that is occurring in this day where men and women are rejecting God, they're turning to the New Age movement, they're turning to Eastern religion, but it has application to Christians. It has application to Christians.

Because as Christians, if we are not careful, we can find ourselves under the same influence of this evil that's permeating the society today and Satan would want to really, really hurt us, confuse us, make us doubt and question God, because you know what happens to a life that's in that state. It's no good for God. And you probably can name a handful of people who are in that state right now, shipwrecked, completely confused, completely confused.

Verse 5, But thou watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. See, so the exhortation to the Christian is be watchful. Be watchful.

Let the Word of God become so precious to you. Love the Word of God, and the Word of God will love you. Seek the Word of God, and the Word of God will seek you.

Honor the Word of God, and the Word of God will honor you. Treat the Word of God with utter respect, and the Word of God will come to you and treat you with respect. If you sow into the Word of God brokenness, humility, and contriteness, you will reap from the Word of God righteousness, the fear of God, the love for God, a love for righteousness, a love for sanctification, a love, a desire, that consumes your soul to be more like Jesus.

Don't be discouraged. We've all learned the natural lessons. If you plant a garden and you work at it, you're going to get something.

If you're diligent and clean your house, it's going to look good. If you put time into a project, the project is ultimately going to be finished and you're going to be happy about it. The same thing applies to the Word of God.

If you are diligent and you are responsive to God's call, when God woos you, when God draws you, when God stirs you, if you're responsive, it's like sowing, and you're going to reap. You're going to reap. And your harvest will be a testimony to men and women, a wonderful testimony to men and women.

So, tonight we've seen a little bit more of the character of lawlessness. We saw that it is running wild in the world. It is a feeling of no restraint, no limits, no limits.

Do what you want. And the nature is that, the nature and characteristic of lawlessness, sin, is basically it draws you away from the Word of God. Now, it can entice you, it can excite you, it can promise you a lot of good things, but it's corrupt inside.

So, what we as Christians must recognize, Ephesians chapter 6, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and wickedness in high places. What are these powers doing? What is this wickedness wanting to do? Turn you from the Word of God.

Turn your heart from serving the living God. But Jesus is greater. And as we apply ourselves to the Word of God, God can deliver us.

Are there any questions regarding what we have discussed tonight? Any questions? Well, praise the Lord. If there's no questions, then we can end our teaching tonight. And I want to encourage you, 2 Peter chapter 2. If you get some time, I would encourage you to read it, to study it, and be prepared.

In the near future, we're going to delve into that. And just take one verse at a time and dig into it and discover the exact nature of the Spirit that's working in the world. And then see how sneaky that Spirit is and how it gets into our homes without us even knowing it.

It even gets into our lives and it influences us and deceives us. And as Christians, what it does is it hinders our testimony for God. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the Word of God. We thank You that by it we are instructed, we are warned, we are encouraged. We thank You, Lord, for Thy faithfulness.

Thy mercies are new every morning and You'll never remove Your mercy, Lord, from those that love You and trust in You. We thank You, Lord, that we have a sure confidence that You are the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. Father, I pray that You will stir our hearts.

Oh, Spirit of God from heaven, come to us. Come to us, Lord, with Thy holy fire. Reveal Thy place, O Lord, Thy place, O God, as being upon the throne.

Show us Thy Word. Purge us, Lord, by Thy Word. Burn in us a fire and by this fire, Lord, consume everything that's not pleasing in Your eyes.

Give us grace. Give us mercy. And may we experience the wonderful working of Thy Spirit divine.

In Jesus' name, let's sing this song.

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