

KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sunday Worship, July 23, 2023

Title: The Danger of Neglecting God's Word for Popularity

Dr. J.R. Cuevas – Guest Pastor

Scripture: **2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV**

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Message: Title: The Danger of Neglecting the Word of God for Popularity

We are in the last times. When the apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:1 that “difficult times will come” and in 2 Timothy 4:3 that “the time will come”, what was prophesied back then is now true today. Our present times is what Paul warned Timothy about. And it is a tense time for Christians not just around the world, but in the United States as well. For a long time, our country was a haven for those who wanted to exercise the freedom to live out their Christian faith. But more and more, the safety and freedom that Christians felt they had in the United States with respect to the practice and preaching of the faith is being threatened. And churches are caving in. Churches are being pressured, accused, and even threatened because of traditionally believing what the Bible teaches. More and more, our society is growing hostile to the teaching of the Bible. More and more, what is Biblical is not what is popular. And what is popular is what is unbiblical.

As Christians, as a church, we must be aware of the present condition of popular society with respect to the Word of God, so that we may know what to remain firm against. If we are caught off guard or are unprepared, we may fall into the trap that many churches have fallen to: neglecting God's Word for the sake of popularity. In this particular passage, Paul warns Timothy of the society that we are currently in. It was the prospect for Timothy, but the present for us. And in this passage of 2 Timothy 4:3-4, the Scriptures call us to beware of what our present society hates, seeks, and believes.

First, we must beware of what popular society hates. What is it that our society will eventually grow intolerant of? It's interesting that this whole idea of “tolerance” is preached by society, and there is something that society is growing increasingly tolerant of. Paul gives the answer: “...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” Paul warned Timothy that he needed to keep preaching the Word as opposed to pleasing society, because society will eventually become intolerant of the sound teaching - namely biblical teaching. That is where we are today. More and more, people are accusing Bible preachers and Christians in general as haters and being guilty of hate crimes, simply because we preach and teach what the Bible says. More and more, public institutions are banning the sound teaching of the Bible. We are now in a society where, if you teach and preach what the Bible says, you will lose the favor of society.

Second, we must beware of what popular society seeks. What is it that people in our society are accumulating for themselves? Paul makes it clear: “wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.” Society no longer desires to be taught the truth. People, in other words, are more interested in surrounding themselves with teachers who teach what it is that endorses their own desires. People don’t want to be taught anymore about what is right and wrong. They simply want their own desires to be endorsed and supported, and they will look for teachers who will do that for them. We must be ware of this, lest we ourselves succumb to the pressure of trying to tickle people’s ears with church sermons and messages.

Third, we must beware of what popular society believes. Paul makes it clear, that society “will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” The truth is the teaching of Scripture. Myths, on the other hand, refers to any teaching or explanation of something that is contrary to fact. Back then, people would use myths to support or excuse their immoral behavior. And there is nothing new under the sun. Today, people are no longer as a whole, interested in what is true. In fact, they are turning away from what is true. Instead, they are choosing to believe things that are contrary to fact, but that they know will support the lifestyle that they want to live. As Christians, we must be careful not to neglect the Word of God in order to please the popular society, because popular society want to ascribe to myths - things that they know are untrue, but they insist are true so that they can do what they want to do.

But although we live in these times where moral society is decaying, in a parallel universe something else is happening. While society as a whole is decaying and crumbling, something else is being built. That is God’s church. And it happens through one saved soul at a time, one sanctified soul at a time. And how do those souls get saved and sanctified? Through the truth. And God has promised that in every region of the globe and every people group of the human population, there will indeed be people who will hear. He has prepared for those people to hear the truth about Christ from the Scriptures. They will hear and believe. And so if we want to have an impact on our community, if we want people to be saved, if we want disciples of Christ and worshippers of God to be made in Hawaii, if we want Jesus Christ to be exalted and glorified through the building of His church in our region, then the church must commit to holding fast to the Word of God which is able to save souls, no matter how unpopular it gets with our society.

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In His grace,
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