

THE DANGER OF SILENCE

By Keith Greer

When Paul brought the elders from Ephesus down to Miletus, he gave them some sobering instructions. What did he warn them about?

"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves." {Acts 20:29,30} Where would the danger come from? Within the flock!

Peter gave a similar warning in his second epistle.

"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber." {2 Peter 2: 1-3}

An understanding of these two passages of scriptures should cause one to see the danger of false teaching. Sadly, many congregations of the Lord's people wait too long. Error has already taken hold. How could it have been prevented?

"These were more fair minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." {Acts 17:11}

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" {1 John 4:1}

Members of the Lord's church need to be concerned and listening to what is being taught! If more brethren took this duty seriously, the church would be much sounder. Why don't we learn from the lessons of the past? Remember Pergamos? What did the Lord have "against her"?

"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." {Revelation 2:14,15}

This church had tolerated the teaching and teachers of error! Instead of opposing the teaching, they allowed it to take hold and spread in the church. Simply put, they had compromised truth. Why did they remain silent? We are not told. What good reason could a church give to allow error to take hold? Let me give you a few I've heard.

"We don't want to hurt feelings". Should one be more concerned with the souls which could be harmed, including the false teacher, or their feelings? Unfortunately, many of God's people just don't want to deal with unpleasant situations. "Kick the can down the road" and allow somebody else to deal with it or maybe it will go away by itself.

"We need to be long—suffering". Surely no one would deny this to be true. Yet, how long suffering should we be when souls are at stake? The danger with this type of thinking is that one may wait too long and error gets a foothold and will be more difficult to uproot.

"We cannot all agree on any point of truth". This in the past few years has been the cry of some of my brethren. Have we come so far that we can no longer understand truth? Please read 1 Corinthians 1:10 and Philipians 3:16. Someone should have told Paul!

Silence may be "golden" in some situations but not when men are teaching things contrary to God's revealed word. Will you remain silent when error is being taught? Consider the cost!
