

Troublemakers!

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Online service sheet during the coronavirus.

Reading Isaiah 42:1-9 (page 727)

Reading 2 Tim 2:23-26 (page 1196)

Title: Troublemakers!

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The audio file is **20\_05\_10.mp3** in the sermons directory

Reflective prayer what does this mean for me Lord.....

Close -----

**Welcome**

Welcome again to KNBC, I'm glad we can join together like this though still at home. Let us continue to bring worship and prayer to the Lord and serve him as best we can. I trust you have just read our passage this morning 2 Tim 2:23-26. Now as we turn to His word, let's pray.

It was a cold January in 1969, and they were seated on a vast, even colder, soundstage at London's Twickenham Film Studios, and in the company of the last people in the world they wanted to be with. They had been trying for days to write and rehearse new material for a scheduled upcoming live show – their first since August 1966 – but the task wasn't going well. Only one member had any sense of urgency, who said: "I don't see why any of you, if you're not interested, got yourselves into this," "What's it for? It can't be for the money. Why are you here? I'm here because I want to do a show, but I don't see an awful lot of support." He said a few other things and waited, but he got no response, the other just stared back.

- The break-up of the Beatles in January 1969 was a shock to the world. Why couldn't the 'fab four' get on? Why couldn't they continue to work together? Many music bands before and after have gone the same way. They split up because they can't get on.

Sadly break-ups also happen in the churches. There are churches now no longer together because there's been contention and trouble.

Our Baptist Association has a booklet on how to resolve a situation when there has been a break-up or should I say a break-down between people.

Well here Paul writes to Timothy on the subject. Timothy is charged with leading the church in the major city of Ephesus. It's a tough call. He had to face problems arising in the fellowship. How is he to deal with them?

So let us look first at the problem, then how did it/does it come? And then lastly how to deal with it. x2

**So firstly the... The problem**

There is trouble and discord amongst God's people. In the church there's chatter and talk - and they are causing arguing, what Paul describes as foolish and stupid arguments. They are stupid because they are foolish. They contain no wisdom but are worldly, and are usually fixated on one issue, they're foreign to the bible and to the Gospel, they are destructive.

Behind this is a person or people with a critical spirit. Dissenting, complaining voices are producing sourness, there's a bad air, Joy has gone.

Often there are strong personalities that prevail meaning that some - who sense it is wrong - are fearful to speak.

- It is easy to air strong opinions that end up favouring some people and criticizes others. Who the church officers should be, or criticizing the churches policy on giving, or music and the choice of hymns, or why isn't someone a member or grumbling about to pastor who with the words of Korah in Number 16 "has gone too far".

What seems 'much ado about nothing' doesn't stay that way for long. It agitates, vain talk becomes finger pointing and soon the seed of controversy has taken root.

Paul says to the members of the Church Timothy is leading there should be no **obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.** Eph 5:4

We are to have opinions, but airing them unwisely prompts others to give theirs and the result? **they produce quarrels.** They cause **strife** which breaks the peace of church, for the conversation has not been designed to help others rather myself, so it hinders fellowship rather than helps it, it grieves God, has no benefit to our souls, or the progress of the Gospel.

Behind the curtain lurks the devil who loves all this. He wants to stir things up. **Like the communist regimes operating in foreign countries who quietly sow dissension and try to destabilize the country.** So the devil tries to ensnare people, taking them captive to do his will. And what is that

will, his ultimate target? Christ - And his means? To destroy His people. – And he is very good at it.

■ We know the phrase 'Like a bull in a china shop' TV advert, damage!!

### *How does it come?*

In our passage Paul makes it very clear who is behind the trouble and how he works. The devil is there – and he is working through people.

The devil invisible though he is - is real enough. He doesn't appear in person but recruits others to carry out his destructive work. He has his front men and women, those he has taken captive like prisoners, they are now his pawns. Those lacking in self-control are easy prey. "Ha, I have a job for you?"

He provokes our sinful desires, making us chose for me not for Christ Jas 4:1

**What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?**

God's Holy Spirit in a Christian says "kill off those evil selfish desires and pride". But there's another voice saying "go ahead this is what you want, stand by your rights, don't allow yourself to be offended" and a 100 and 1 other plausible arguments.

As soon as a Christian gives in to this sin then they're in the bag. Christians can be - and are often - instruments in Satan's hands.

V26 speaks of those in the devils **trap ... the trap** here Satan is compared to a fowler who catches someone. Getting people interested in side issues, peculiar teachings, contentions issues, whether its bible translation, Christmas, women in ministry, the Holy Spirit, music, etc., etc., making this or that the big issue are easy ways to ensnares or net his catch.

So he has them in his nets – they are taken alive, and held fast, and become his captives, and his slaves, **who has taken them captive to do his will.**

■ Film 'Freedom' "Take them alive" in recapturing the runaway slaves

What is so sad is that while unbelievers are trapped unawares and cannot do anything to avoid it, believers are trapped willingly - we have chosen to, we have been given a guard by God -but chosen to put it down, and been caught

**Satan has a hit list all nicely in order to attack everything important to God.**

Satan's great desire is to dishonour Christ, and especially by destroying His precious church. Either's it's the church's work, or it's witness or it's order or it's the destroying of harmony and fellowship between believers. Satan

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attacks relationships, He attacks family, He attacks authority, and so as here, the arguing ends up opposing the pastor. Arguments turn into quarrels, and quarrels turn into opposition towards Timothy.

Let us summarise so far, Paul is speaking to Timothy about **foolish and stupid arguments**. See how much of the passage is all about words!

Words are really important to God x2 So Satan loves to misuse words.

✚ We have the devil using people – and now people using words.

The word 'argument' is also translated 'fighting' or 'strife' or 'striving'

I can recall more than one such situation like this at KNBC. For example:

✚ This lady Helen (not her name) had a contentious spirit, there was pride.

She seemed so sweet and harmless but did great damage with that weapon her tongue.

Psalm 55:21 "His - or her - **speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.**"

She had words, - and plenty of them. So many words, words on words.

Words said, words added, the emails and letters became longer and longer

■ Until it feels like one is being wound round like the suitcase in the airport cling film machine.

Woes to him who adds words to words Ec 10:14 the fool **multiplies words.**

**When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.** Pr 10:19

While there was an object to the attacks – everyone was drawn in. The weapon was the tongue, the ammunition 'words', the target a sister in Christ – and it wasn't long before it was the Minister's fault!

*So 3<sup>rdly</sup> How should Timothy - and I - respond to those like this?*

**And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.**

Paul uses the phrase **the Lord's servant** which while it could apply to any believer here in the singular applies to the Minister.

Let's see firstly how he should NOT respond!

He **must not quarrel** - To be drawn into this mode is to slip badly

■ With BCM on the street we find there are a number who just love to argue. They come along just for that. It is so easy to be drawn in and argue. The result? Those walking past shake their heads they

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can't, - and have no desire to - work out who is the arguer and think "they're all at it"

✚ To join in is to become like them.

While Paul tells Timothy **not to have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments**. "Ok I won't have anything to do with them" he says to himself – for they have nothing to do with me" but they do, the devil will make sure they do and to stop them hurting others a minister can't just walk away or ignore them. – important things do need to be discussed .... But these can and should be discussed in a good spirit.

The minister could also be tempted to respond rashly, harshly, or emotionally with bruised pride.

**Not resentful.** Not motivated by a desire to clear my name or be revengeful to 'prove my point'.

Or Timothy being young and could be prone to back off and become protective. Actually this could be true for a minister of any age. He could put up the walls, take it personally, - and it could be meant personally – The devil will always try to make it end up feeling personal.

So the Minister shouldn't withdraw, show upset and try to appeal for peace on the basis of sympathy.

■ Have those 3D pictures were the image changes when you tilt them?

A minister shouldn't try to be flexible or 'diplomatic' and say different things to different people to seek find peace by agreeing with everyone.

No as Paul told Titus he **must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.** Tit1:9

So how SHOULD a minister respond?

**The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.**

Don't be afraid - It is easy to feel intimidated, **those who oppose him he must gently instruct, - he is to instruct, -** with a sound knowledge he must apply the scriptures to the situation. He should be **able to teach**, which means explain reasonably and clearly the issues at hand in a good spirit.

✚ We hear the phrase 'pastoral theology' all theology is pastoral theology - and all pastoral care - if it is to be of any lasting use - is theological.

As Paul says to Titus with **soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.** Tit 2:8

The pastor's manner is really important - **Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, gently**

Challenging understanding and conduct can make someone angry. E.g. the company someone keeps or un-forgiveness or believing not meet at Xmas We are not to become angry, denounce them or hold them up to public reproach and scorn; but patiently instruct. We do this believing knowledge of the truth is key to progress.

If they are angry, we are not to be. If they oppose the truth, we are still calmly to state it to them. If they are slow to see it, we are not to become weary, impatient or frustrated in showing them what the truth is.

Our manner is important - To be hard makes that person defensive and he or she will dig in and to defend his or her opinions, and will not budge.

Meekness and gentleness win his *heart* first, and then lovingly show him *what the truth is*, and with as unassuming a spirit, he'll be drawn.

Paul says he was: "**gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.**" 1Th 2:7

**"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted."** Ga 6:1

**he must be kind to everyone,** A kind and gentle manner endears to person to you, they can see, and feel, that this pastor cares for me. It keeps the door open to progress. One fault of a pastor is to expect that too quickly. We have to be patient and pray why pray? Because something needs to happen, the penny needs to drop, the heart needs to soften, some light must come in.

**in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,** 2Ti 2:25

■ One lady who I've worked with has upset just about everyone. She is quick to be angry and intimidates others with her temper. Agree or...

■ She's hard work. Yet recently there have been changes; she told me the other day that the Lord had been speaking to her about humility – a word not before in her vocabulary. It was wonderful to hear it. These things make me want to cry. She is not there yet, she's still prickly but there has been real noticeable progress praise God. PTL.

The devil has great power to deceive - it requires great power to be released.

Stuck in our darkness it requires the Lord to shine upon us by the light of his truth. He wakens us out of that deadly sleep, breaks apart the snares which bound us and, having removed all obstacles, trains us in obedience to him.

✚ **To acknowledge the truth we once opposed, is repentance!**

And this is the gift of God who makes things clear and opens the eyes of the understanding. Are things not clear to you? Ask him to open your eyes and heart. GOSPEL

So the leader must gently instruct those who oppose him – **in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses**

This metaphor ‘**come to their senses**’ is taken from drunken men. They’ve had too much to drink and are not in their senses and fallen into a deep slumber. Paul is describing troublemakers as those intoxicated under the influence of error, who now "awake," and come to themselves, and appear to be sober, and in their right mind.

✚ **That clear mind realizes and regrets the wrong and hurt caused.**

Most don’t set out to be troublemakers – but unless we are careful we can become one.

So finally .... What are the lessons to be learned?

How should I the Christian make sure I’m not the cause of trouble?

Watch out - when someone comes to you to talk about someone else.

Watch out - the devil wants you to elevate problems, to make assumptions about other people’s motives, to assume the worst, to take offense etc.

Paul reminds us **Do not entertain an accusation against an elder /leader unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.** 1Ti 5:19 it should not be brought lightly. Watch out - We can see the devil at work when little things are made into big things. Remember he who elevates something rather than cover it - promote sin, - but those who overlook or covers over an offense - promote love.

✚ **If we are not part of the answer we are part of the problem.**

The devil loves to stir things up that is why we must resist him and stand firm, **Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.** 1Pe 5:8

✚ **Feelings and pride are two main doors that allow Satan to enter.**

Korah in his rebellion (Nu 16) struck down, not Sentimental X Holy God.

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The devil blinds the minds of unbelievers – but that should not be true of us! *“Lord help me not walk into his traps & become stuck, and bring down others. Lord lead me not into temptation and deliver me from the evil one”*

Paul said speaking of the devil trying to enter a church **we are not unaware of his schemes.** Nor should you or I be. Why not read what Paul says in that paragraph in 2 cor 2 what we should do to protect him damaging the church!

✚ **Satan loves to set Christian against Christian – may he not use you and I, may none of us be a pawn in his hands.**

**Live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.** Eph 4:1-3

✚ **so no break-downs or break-up’s**

We have a responsibility to watch our words and watch our hearts the source of our words. **Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks**

**Warm water at the tap a mixer tap I need to switch the source to cold**

So **Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.** Pr 4:23

I will finish with Jonathan Edwards who says

There are many things that greatly oppose the grace which is in the heart of the Christian. — The child of God is encompassed with enemies on every side. He is a pilgrim and stranger passing through an enemy's country, and exposed to attack at any and every moment. There are thousands of devils, artful, intelligent, active, mighty, and implacable, that are bitter enemies to the grace that is in the heart of the Christian, and do all that lies in their power against it.

And the Christian has not only many enemies without, but multitudes within his own heart, that he carries about with him. Evil thoughts and sinful inclinations cling to him; and many corruptions that still hold their footing in his heart they are exceedingly strong and powerful, and very bitter in their animosity — implacable, irreconcilable, mortal enemies, seeking nothing short of the utter ruin and overthrow of grace.

**Miracle we are not at each other’s throats or Christ’s church like East E.**

Praise God for his Grace. Watch yourself – and watch others over others - **See to it that no-one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”** Heb 12:14-15

✚ **That is a responsibility all of us have. May he help us \_\_\_\_\_End**

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