

Sunday 28th November 2021 10 am

“Dealing with distraction” Getting in the way

Welcome

Opening Scripture

Hymn: MP 94 Come let us sing of a wonderful love

Bible Reading: Micah 4:1-5 (p. 932)

Prayer of adoration and praise.

Children’s talk

Toys Powerpoint

Notices

Choruses MP 151 For I’m building a people of power
MP choice

Open time to share

Main reading: 2 Peter 1:1-11 (p.1222), Titus 3:9-11 (page 1199)

Hymn: MP 975 Before the throne of God above

Sermon “Dealing with distraction”

Hymn MP 501 O Jesus I have promised

Close

Listen to today’s sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.

The audio file is [21_11_28.mp3](#). MP 676, 880

Moto text: **Do not grieve: the Joy of the Lord is your Strength** Jer 8:10

Exordium

- Have you ever gone down the road and another driver cuts in on you? Or all is going fine until to find the road you want to use is blocked.
- You are heading for a car park space and at the last minute someone else shoots in first. You are at the supermarket as you reach out for the milk another has it. – The last one.

So often in life something crops up, gets in the way or knocks us off course So it is in the Christian life - The sermon title is “*Dealing with distraction*” x2

- Con artists trick you through distraction, You are drawn to look in one direction - while someone steals from you in another.

Paul writes to Titus, the leader of the Church in Crete to help him and the Christians there become strong in the faith and to get on with doing good – the major theme of the letter. Here in 3:9-11 Paul is pausing to warn them that they will face obstacles. There will be, as it were: road blocks, detours, distractions, things that get in the way, knock them off course, and in every way hinder them walking rightly before God. – **all by means of things said.**

- ✚ **This is the reality of the Christian life. Expect it. - To be forewarned is to be forearmed x2**

Satan has been trying to hinder God’s good purposes from the beginning. We know that Jesus had the ultimate victory on the cross and crushed Satan’s **head**, but along the way Satan constantly ‘**strikes his heel**’ Gen 3:15

All the way through, leading up to the birth of Christ, Satan had been trying to thwart God’s plan of brining the promised Messiah, his Saviour Son into the world. When Jesus started his ministry Satan was there to tempt him to fall. As Jesus resolutely set out for the cross Satan used the religious leaders to try to break God’s perfect plan and timing. And even on the cross Satan is there “**come down from the cross and we will believe in you**” x2

- ✚ **Beware a cross-less message. – It is a salvation-less message.**

Now Satan is trying to get at God through His people; you and I. A sign that you are a true follower of Jesus is that Satan is after you. If you are not following Jesus, he need do little, x2 for you are in the bag already.

- ✚ **All true believers must expect trouble. It has been ordained for you!**

Jesus warns us that in this life you **will have trouble**.

Titus is told that there will be those who through **arguments** and **controversies** will do their best to knock God’s people off course.

- It doesn't take much – On a ship just one degree off course and in a few days you are hundreds of miles away from where you should be.

It is easy to fall prey to some wrong teaching – say a low view of church fellowship - and after a while you are a long way from where you should be.

- Satan does a little nudge - That is what racing cars do to each other, a slight clip and the car is sent skidding off into the barrier.

Note the context of our passage this morning

Paul has been speaking about the wonderful grace that had come to them v7 **so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.** As he talks about grace can you see where it leads....

He goes on: 8 **This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.** excellent = good before God, profitable = is useful for everyone.

The Christians in Crete were given every encouragement to do what is good, to be active in love and good works,

Straight after this passage v12 you can feel to energy of action: **come to Nicopolis....13. Do everything you can to help Apollus.** 14 everyone **must learn to devote yourselves to doing what is good.**

The wonderful gift of God grace: to be saved from judgment and hell is such a glorious state to be in, - and that it is given freely - should produce a fountain of good works in gratitude. Have you received? Then does it show?

The CROSS is where God is willing – upon your repentance - to deal with your sin. This is the most urgent matter. The Son of God suffered greatly so that you and I can know peace with God. If you have come to the cross then it will show in that you now serve him. Those who follow Jesus, who love and serve him will be sure of going to heaven. But you must finish well, so watch out that nothing gets in the way - so you must careful.

9 avoid foolish controversies - and genealogies - and arguments - and quarrels

In other words beware - things will be said that will not help you - but hinder you, Avoid them, give them a body swerve so you can keep running the race, like those narrow bits in the park to stop bicycles you slip quickly through sideways.

Paul told the Church in Galatia who were **expressing their faith in love.** **“You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?”** Ga 5:6,7. Satan will always attack obedience. He hates it.

Like that dog that suddenly appears and rushes towards you. A few years ago I thought I had evaded one, but he got under my feet and I went flying.

Jesus we are told in Psalm 22 **“Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me.”** 13-14. As he was attacked so we will be.

Words from that velvet tongue can all appear so innocent. It is true some people have real and good questions that deserve and answer. But others present arguments which sound fine but they are actual as disruptive as a dog under your feet, as someone cutting in on you, as if a car just roared out of a side road and into you – These arguments produce quarrelling – the result is you lose your focus, they take your eyes off the truth - and the Lord. Recognise them for what they are - obstacles, that get in the way.

When trying to serve the Lord we can be hit by a major discouragement.

- Chris was saying how someone criticised a Bible study he was leading and it knocked him for six and produced so much discouragement he stopped for a while, but I am glad it was only a while.
- There are some Christians who have stopped going to church because of something said.

Arguments divide churches, George Verwer whom I will be quoting later said one of the major causes of churches splitting was over tongue speaking.

The detailed problems

Paul's list is pretty inclusive: **foolish controversies, genealogies, arguments and quarrels about the law.**

- ✚ Calvin said: **There are those who inquire curiously into everything, and are never at rest, may be truly called Questionarians! – I've met many!**

He cites the universities of the day and the Roman Catholics and says:

- ✚ **In short, what they produce is nothing else than a labyrinth of questions. They are foolish; not that, at first sight, they appear to be such, (for, on the contrary, they often deceive by a vain parade of wisdom,) but because they contribute nothing to godliness.**

Paul had to say the same to Timothy beware of people **devoting themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith.** 1 Ti 1:4 ... in others out of love for Jesus.

Arguments or contentions are often served up as "questions". "Just one more question", behind it is a spirit of selfish ambition, the 'question' is designed to prove my point - not listen to the opinion of the others, *don't be drawn in*. If you are then you will be drawn away from your service for the Lord, you will be distracted, side-tracked, diverted, Satan's: "come this way" is just as in Pilgrim's progress with Christian on his way to heaven the Celestial City

1. Along the way he met **Evangelist** a preacher of the Holy Word and always eager to help. But he meets **Obstinate** and then **Pliable** A well-intentioned man who joins Christian on his journey but having little courage and less resolution turns back at the first obstacle. There is **Mr. Worldly Wiseman**. There are **Formalist and Hypocrisy** and **Apollyon** A foul fiend whom Christian encounters in the Valley of Humiliation. **Mr. Talkative** One of those willing to discuss anything, often very sensibly, but never willing to do anything. **By-ends** likes religion when it "goes in silver slippers," **Giant Despair** throws him into the cellar dungeon in his stronghold called Doubting Castle. There's **Ignorance**, and then **Turn-away**. There's **Flatterer** who induces the Christian to follow him, leading them in a circular course and into a net from which there appears to be no means of escape. And there's **Atheist** who laughs at the pilgrim, telling him: "There's no such place as the Celestial City."

✚ **Have you met people like that? – may there be non in our midst!**

Paul mentions those who **quarrel about the law**, this is '**Formalist**' This was very prominent years ago when people were more biblically literate, now it is seen mainly in the cults and other religions. However, there are some who insist we must keep the Sabbath and meet on Saturday, or we must avoid Christmas or must have certain music or must have certain Bible translation.

There are some who profess to follow Jesus but talk more of government policy on lockdown, vaccines, global warming than taking out the gospel to the lost. He says they **are unprofitable and useless**. Dwelling on these does nothing to promote Godliness. Beware!

Paul says they are **divisive** people, for their message is contrary to God.

That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. Gal 5:8

In other word's spot what is of God and what is not. Be discerning. x2 If it is from Satan it will hinder (even if it promises the opposite) if it is from God it will promote love and good works. **these are unprofitable and useless**, no they are not good, and not of God, damaging for everyone and dishonouring to the Lord.

unprofitable and useless in teaching we should always consider its usefulness - anything and everything that does not contribute to godliness – dismiss it!

Paul warns the Galatians Christians they are **throwing you into confusion** 5:10 These men are throwing them into a spin, they are undermining the faith in the church, it is a destructive work, like that slow but fatal dry rot.

- George Verwer produced a leaflet entitled 'The Hows and Whys of disunity' Firstly he rightly cites our human sinfulness, he mentions strong minded leaders who are often impatient, something the devil uses, he mentions money, something the devil uses, he mentions unfairness and greed, he mentions the devil's favourite: 'The blame game' and says "how hard it is for leaders to correct most people! Those corrected often turn on you, blaming you, or pointing out some fault in your own life, or they look for someone else to blame".
- He says "Some people seem unhappy no matter what" and in a section on 'the tendency to be negative'. Says "some people, for whatever reasons, always seem negative. Be careful to discern such persons, and resist taking them on staff, even if some team members may want them. Realize some who started well, can get so confused, or grieved because God didn't answer their prayers, that they lose their biblical faith. That has happened in OM, and nearly all agencies have experienced Bible school and seminary graduates 'turning back'.
- Your co-worker might be a more positive and forgiving person, but what about his/her spouse? Many a spouse has brought division between their husband/wife and their direct leader. So often, human pride is in the middle of it. We need to ask ourselves, "How easy is it for people to correct me or exhort me?" *There's a question I have asked myself!*

What are the hindrances you/we face here in KNBC?

I want to encourage you to be active in serving – It honours the Lord and it is the means of Joy for you – Motto text 2021 what is getting in the way?

Has there been criticism? Or teaching that has discouraged you to act, or that you don't really need to as a Christian – because "I am saved by Grace"

How very dangerous. Ask yourself now "what is stopping me from serving as the Lord as I should?" Some here are gradually building up an area of service, only to give up, why? What is causing this? What has got in your way?

Is it busyness at home, worldly plans? others in the family? Other people? a feeling of not being good enough, I can't do it, I don't have the energy, The ability. Lord expects you to do what you can do – not what you cannot do – and when you step out and do it - you will be surprised what you can do!"

- Putting out the chairs, practical maintenance see Tim or me, visiting elderly folk and bringing them to lunch on Thurs 16th

What is hindering you? if it is negative discouraging conversation we are told what to do – avoid it.

1. Avoid

avoid foolish controversies, avoid the discussion, avoid the conversation, give them a wide berth. Don't be an audience for them to preside over and influence. In fact, if no-one listened it would not take place, it would all dry up if no-one gave them any attention.

That is what we should do, for your sake, for their sake, for the Lord's sake.

Notice it is not to avoid people per se, it is the arguing we must avoid.

2. Warn

10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time.

Paul is speaking to the Pastor here, However it is all our responsibility to care for the wellbeing of the church.

Talking to the church Heb 12 says: **"See to it that no-one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."** 12:15

Why? to let it linger without being addressed is dangerous **"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."** Gal 5:9

- When a car engine makes an unusual noise it is not running right, - and attention is needed.

So with a church, do you hear noises and rumblings?, like the engine ask where is that coming from? Attention is needed.

It will fall to the pastor to say what needs to be said. It's an important part of the Elder's role. A church will not function as, or indeed be, a church without at least one Elder.

3. Separate

After that then have nothing to do with him. not before you have spoken to him or her no but **After that, .. After that then have nothing to do with him.**

There will be *heresies* and *heretics* in the church. If someone forsakes the truth as it is in Jesus, and brings false doctrines and propagates them to the corrupt the faith of others, if they cannot be reclaimed – must be rejected.

- Ken Bailey – confronted in a meeting, told to not open his mouth.

As Paul says to the Romans: **'Keep away from them'**. 16:17

In Romans 16 there's that list of those busy in the faith. Paul warns them against those who try to get in the way: **I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.** 15:17

Satan love to divide, put a wedge in and cause disharmony amongst brothers and sisters

18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

If it continues they should be put out of the fellowship. **"11 You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.** Tit 3:9-11

We are to keep our house in order, some say "don't judge", (probably the most quoted verse in the Bible - and least applied correctly).

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you." 1Co 5:12,13 how often we get it the wrong way round - and judge those outside - but not those inside.

Let us encourage – not discourage one another and **make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit** Eph 4. **A team unified is a team that can achieve much.**

- John Bunyan said: Christians are like the flowers in a garden, that have each of them the dew of Heaven, which, being shaken with the wind, they let fall at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of each other.

If Christ has called you – then he has called you to His service, we are all 'saved to serve'. Let us spur one another on to love and good works.

- George Verwer has been to me, and many others, the most motivating of people. He is one of those cloud of witness for me...

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, Let us read their biographies, catch the fire of their dedication, see their single-mindedness and **let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."**

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