

**Message #73 of Scripture Beneath The Surface**  
*“Children Shall Rise Up Against Their Parents”*

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Well, today I'd like to talk about the infiltration of today's church by Satan's deceptive tactics. And first of all, I want to make it clear that today's church is not pure, and that I don't really expect it to be pure, at least not in the very near foreseeable future. There is a lot of work to be done in the church before Jesus Christ returns in the clouds of heaven. He tells us that he is coming back for a church without spot or wrinkle. Well, at this time, that leaves most of us out of the picture, but that also doesn't mean that we can sit back and rest easy where we are. I believe God is calling his people to come out from among the world social system and be separate, as it implies in 2 Corinthians 6:17-18. This scripture is at the very core of this ministry. Preparation Ministries, which brings you this program of Scripture Beneath The Surface, exists for the purpose of helping to prepare God's children to meet Jesus Christ when he returns. And we do this from the perspective of helping to reveal some of the hidden dangers which threaten the purity of the body of Christ.

However, in order to comprehend most of what our ministry presents, it takes a certain amount of realization on the part of the listener that God's church is not functioning in the manner it should be, and that we, as members of that body of Christ, are responsible to come as far away from the world as possible in order that we might come as close to Jesus Christ as possible. Let me go into some detail here and describe an aspect of deception which permeates the Christian church. It might be referred to specifically as the principle found in the verse of Matthew 10:21, as well as in Mark 13:12. Let's read the portion in Matthew 10:21. It says, “And the brother shall

deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.”

The part of this scripture which most people focus on is where it says, “and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.” This is important, but I also want you to focus on the part of this scripture which says, “And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child.”

Let's read another portion of scripture which is found just a few verses later from the verses we read in Matthew 10:21. These following verses contain the words of Jesus, and they will also help with today's discussion. So if you're following along with me, skip down to verses 34-36 of Matthew, chapter 10, and listen as I read. They say, “Think not that I have come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.”

This is a pretty interesting portion of scripture. Most Christians have a concept of Christianity of peaceful existence. People tend to remember the words of the heavenly host of angels which spoke to the shepherds on the night of Christ's birth, when they said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men.” Now, we know that eternal peace will be ushered in by the King of Glory, Jesus Christ, when he comes in the clouds of heaven. But, we also know that until that time we will have tribulation, as it says in John 16:33. Therefore, when Jesus said that he didn't come to bring peace, but came to bring a sword, and that father should be against son and mother against daughter and brother against brother, and that children should be against their parents, he was showing to the church that until the end of our time on earth, our peace would be compromised by evil, and, that the enemies of our warfare would be those in our own houses.

And this concept is the one I would like you to focus on today, that part I just mentioned, and which I read from Matthew 10:36, “a man's foes shall be they of his own household.” If we're going to get anywhere as Christians, we cannot deny any part of God's word. And when Jesus spoke these words, he wasn't just tossing out some pretty words, but was showing us a very significant portion of truth. And we can trust that the words of Jesus are true. Therefore, we know for a certainty that our foes, our enemies, will be those from within our own house. If we ignore this part of scripture, we ignore the warning that Jesus very explicitly gave to us.

The words of Jesus do not necessarily mean that our enemies will be our own flesh and blood family members, but they could be. But generally it is the people within the Christian church which causes the greatest problem to those who are attempting to live Christ-like lives. It is our spiritual brothers and our spiritual sisters, our spiritual fathers and our spiritual mothers in the church that will produce most of our enemies. And no, we're not looking down our nose at the person next to us and complaining about them. That's not the concept. What the real concept that Jesus was trying to get us to understand is that when we want to go forward with Jesus

Christ, we will experience tribulation and trial from those who are closest to us. It may start with your earthly family when you accept Jesus Christ as Savior. It may be that your earthly family will disapprove of your decision to become a Christian. This is quite common. But the greatest hindrance to the church as a whole is from those who are part of the church itself. Let me explain the background of this principle for you.

When the early church was established on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets of Jesus Christ, tribulation followed. The initial persecution which came against new believers were the Jews who did not believe in Jesus Christ and who fought against the new Christians. The Apostle Paul was initially one of these antagonists until he was converted by his experience with Jesus on the road to Damascus. But persecution soon grew in perspective, and before the time of the death of the twelve apostles of Jesus, persecution had started to come from the other nations, such as Rome. The caesars of Rome, who were the main political force in that day, were the greatest difficulty in the lives of Christians. By the time Christianity was 300 years old, persecution had become quite extreme, and many Christians had suffered martyrdom. The church had been driven underground in many places, and most Christians were forced to practice their belief in Jesus Christ under threat of death.

However, this was not necessarily a bad thing for the church. No, I'm not implying that to be persecuted is enjoyable, however, I do believe that persecution can be a great blessing to a Christian. It's a blessing because it makes strong Christians, and therefore is helpful in weeding out the chaff from the wheat. We know that when Jesus Christ comes back for us that he will separate the chaff from the wheat. So we also realize that it is important for a Christian to be wheat, and not chaff. In the same sense, we know that the body of Christ, the church of today, is made up of sheep and goats. And we also know that when Jesus Christ returns he will also separate the sheep from the goats, and the only ones who will have eternal life with Christ is the sheep. Therefore, we know that Christians must make certain that they are sheep, and not end up as goats.

Persecution, the tribulation of saints, is the fire which purges wickedness from the church. It is persecution which separates those who just want to talk the talk from those who are willing to walk the walk. It is tribulation which brings purity. It is tribulation which produces robes of righteousness which do not have spot or wrinkle. Christians must have the impurities removed from them just as gold and silver must have the impurities removed in order to be pure, and this purification process does not take place without being put through the fire. Jesus promises us that we will be put through the fire and purified. But we also know that if we have true value, as in the purification of gold, silver, or other precious metals, the dross will be removed in the process, the slag will be skimmed from off us, and we will end up being a pure vessel, fit for the Master's hand.

But Satan knows this also. He knows that tribulation will purify the church. And he doesn't want the church to be purified. He knows that those people who withstand the onslaught of persecution will become strong in the Lord, and he doesn't want to see a church that is strong in the Lord.

Now, think about what I am going to say. I know this might be hard for some of you, but think about it. If persecution is promised for God's people, and if the result of this tribulation of the saints is positive, in that it purifies the church, then why do Christians consider the lack of persecution to be such a great thing? Yes, of course I understand that no trial seems to be joyous, and that burning at the stake is a most unpleasant task. But on the other hand, it is in times when the Christians, or the church in general, are offered peace from their enemies that the greatest destruction of our faith takes place.

Persecution is not fun, but an offering of peace from the enemy can be destructive to the church in that if no persecution comes to the church, the church will never be refined. The dross will never be burned off and the slag will not be skimmed from its surface. If the church is to ever become pure and holy, then we as Christians need to stop trying to avoid persecution at every possible turn. No, we don't need to suffer in every possible situation, but, when we avoid persecution from our enemies by allowing ourselves to be infiltrated with a watered down Christianity, then we are never going to wash our robes and become a church without spot or wrinkle.

Let me share something as an example of how Christianity suffers when we look for peace in this present world rather than forging ahead for the sake of living and preaching God's pure word. As I mentioned earlier in today's message, Rome was the major political force involved in the persecution of Christians from the time of the Apostles to about the year 314 A.D. The Roman emperor Constantine effectively squashed persecutions of Christians from about that time on, and supposedly became a Christian himself. Although this did cause persecution to generally cease from the Christian church, it also caused the church to be infiltrated by people who called themselves Christians but who had no true convictions of living a life of Christ. Because Christians were given preference then from Constantine, many people could call themselves Christians and gain various benefits because of their claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. In one sense, the freeing of Christians from active persecution was a blessing. But in the other sense, it was a curse in that anyone could then be a Christian. No longer was a person compelled to make a quality decision for Christ because becoming a Christian brought immediate earthly benefits without any commitment in the face of persecution. When the fear of persecution was removed, the Christian church actually became a haven for couch potato Christians. The true Christians were still present within the Roman society, but there were so many complacent Christians that the recognized church became tainted. No longer was there a need to have such a great and yearning desire for Jesus Christ in order to commit to Christianity. This infiltration of the church by pagans was nothing more or less than the old, "If you can't beat-em, join-em" concept which undermines many established value systems.

Satan knows that in order to destroy Christianity, he needs to destroy from within. The words of Jesus prove this by saying that our enemies would be those, not from without, but from within our own houses. This same concept, of the destruction of Christianity through the edicts of Constantine, are accomplished all the time, day in and day out, in our churches. It is an

infiltration tactic which waters down the fervent convictions of true Christians and causes the church to become a testimony of what I call an, “easy grace system of religion,” where Christians can easily be Christians without having to go through the narrow gate. The parable of this narrow gate in scripture was put in our Bible to warn us that “easy-grace religion” is not going to prepare people for heaven. Yet most Christians seem to think that a simple claim of believing Jesus is the Son of God is sufficient to ensure their salvation. However, if this were true, and if all a person had to do was repeat the sinners prayer offered by the minister, then the parable Jesus gave of entering in through the narrow gate would be useless. Also useless would be the statement that, “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

When it becomes easy to be a Christian, the church becomes weak. No longer does fervent Christian desire for the complete commitment to God flourish. The body of Christ has undergone a continual infiltration from the beginning of time. We have a prime example of it in the story of Balaam, the prophet of God who was spoken to by his donkey. He was wicked at heart, and although he could not attain the riches promised to him from King Balak of the Moabites by cursing Israel prophetically, he did give Balak the knowledge of how to eventually overcome the Israelites. Balaam's advice to Balak was not to try and conquer Israel by force, but that the Moabites should infiltrate the Children of Israel and introduce their own gods and their own sinful ways into the Israelite social system. The Israelites then adopted the ways of the Moabites, which eventually destroyed their strength as God's people.

In our current church society this infiltration tactic happens on a continuing basis. There is a scripture which describes the overall effect of this principal, and is found in the verse I quoted earlier from Matthew 10:21. It says that the children shall rise up and put their parents to death. Now, several interpretations have been offered by different Biblical scholars for this statement, but actually it is quite simple. It's not that children are going to start euthanizing their parents, but that those descendants of Christians, whether actual physical offspring or spiritual offspring will cause the watering down of Biblical concepts and thus destroy the strong spiritual commitment to the word of God. We see this infiltration occur in every generation of church system, and the only answer to it has been for those who recognized the putrid state of the church to come out of it and form a new denominational structure. This, for example, occurred with the Protestant reformation, when Martin Luther and other like-minded people decided that the church was completely past the point of revival. It also can be seen in the Methodist revival in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The fire of true revival brings a restoration of deep sincere commitment to the word of God, not only in confession, but also in the true application of it.

Almost every current church denomination today is a direct result of dissatisfaction of believers who felt that the church was not doing enough in the name of true Christianity and who have determined to start a new fervent work. But eventually, those desires for fervency for the word of God are undermined by a new generation which rises up and replaces the fervent desire of the original church with lukewarm rites and rituals. In today's many different denominations and church groups there is a constant turnover of church congregations because of two basic reasons. The one reason for such a great turnover in church congregations is that some people are looking

for a less strict environment to practice their so-called Christianity. The other reason for great church turnover is that some are looking for a more fervent demonstration of righteousness and holiness. Because of this second reason, small group churches are springing up all over the world in an attempt to bring back that fervent desire for Jesus Christ and the worship of God Almighty. However, there is also a strong movement within the churches to bring about form and ritual, and to put more emphasis on the church social environment than on preaching and teaching the scriptures.

The infiltration of the fervent church with lukewarm rites and rituals is a continuing problem. One major example of Satan's infiltration tactics which is overlooked by most churches is how children destroy the effectiveness of Christianity by refusing to accept spiritual instruction in the home and in the church. Almost every denomination provides fun and games for their children because the children are defiant, refusing to accept instruction in the principles of righteousness, and instead, complain bitterly until someone feeds them pizza and treats them to secular, and sometimes very foolish forms of entertainment. Because the parents give in to these childish tactics, the children rule the church. Parents eventually give up trying to live fervent spiritual lives because they are discouraged by their own failure to make a difference in their own homes. This is none other than a clear example of the Bible verse which tells us that children shall rise up and put their parents to death.

Many churches have accepted a concept of entertaining children and teenagers in the fear that if they actually begin to train them in the way of God, they will revolt. And the possibility of revolt by children is not an empty threat, as seen by the many churches which cater to their every whim. This is bad enough for the spiritual welfare of children, but the adherence to these weak principles also undermine the parents resolve to serve God with all their hearts. This in turn weakens the whole church structure, and the eventual result is a cold dead church which has playground directors as youth pastors instead of having pastors and teachers of youth. Whether the children of families revolt, or new church members revolt, the result is the same. And death of the body is practiced over and over again because people refuse to be on fire for Jesus.

You know, it's an interesting thing to think about, but it's no wonder that people leave the established churches and start new denominational endeavors. They have to. Otherwise they would eventually be led down the broad path of watered down Christianity. And for you church leaders who would call leaving the denomination a frightful sin, remember that your denomination did the same thing. But wasting away in a cold dead church is not the path God has chosen for us. He doesn't want lukewarm Christians, but Christians who are fervent, Christians who are hot. People who are willing to suffer rejection by their peers and even to suffer death if need be. And you know, unless you're ready to die for Christ, you're not really recognizing what true Christianity really is.