

## Discerning an Imitation



Gary Wilkerson September 9, 2019

“And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again” (Acts 20:25).

Paul relentlessly proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ and taught the churches day and night. He endured severe persecution everywhere he went and when he knew by the Holy Spirit that he was going to be martyred, he gathered together the elders of the church at Ephesus. As he shared his love for them, he also left them with an important directive.

“I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. *Therefore be alert*” (20:29-31). Paul issued two warnings: perverse men will come in from the outside, and even your own people will speak twisted things.

Twisted things can be *almost* straight but have just enough slant on them to draw believers astray. Even a slight modification of theology, a small alteration of doctrine, a foolish extremism can cause people to deviate from the truth. Paul spent his life passionately pouring out the Word of God so that his followers would be able to discern an imitation. He wanted them built strong so that they would not be shaken or knocked off center.

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance” (20:32). Paul wanted the elders to go back to their churches and see that the Word of God was properly taught.

We live in a Christian culture that is twisted to the point of no longer being recognizable. I urge you to study the Word of God and walk closely with the Lord so that you may grow in discernment. Knowing *the real thing*, you will not be drawn away into something of a counterfeit nature.

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