

It is our duty to protect the purity of the Gospel for the next generation!

March 12, 2017 Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins

For many years now, we have spent time at the Acadia National Park. My parents took our family there for picnics and we scoured the beaches for collectibles such as pretty rocks, sea shells and other treasures like pieces of drift wood and pretty glass.

Like thousands of people who have come from all over the world and have taken the trip up the mountain to see the sights and to hike the trails, we have many fond memories of the coast. In recent years, I did some research on the families that donated parcels of land to the Federal Government in order to preserve the beautiful property so that everyone had access to the views and could enjoy the recreational opportunities that this place has to offer. There are historical signs along the way honoring the wealthy families that wanted to preserve this land for future generations instead of taking advantage of the opportunity they had to sell the land to make a fortune. They looked ahead beyond their time on earth and set out to ensure that rich and poor alike could enjoy the beauty and recreation of this beautiful land of God's country.

We have a rich heritage with the Bible and God has instructed us to be careful how we interpret the Word, how we handle the Word, and how we live our lives in order to protect the Word from being dishonored.

Jesus Christ lived an open, sinless life and no one can point to him and criticize him for wrong doing. His character is described in every book of the Bible and no fault can be found in him.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus left instructions to his eleven disciples who had come to be with him at an appointed place that he designated. He began to talk to them about the work that he was going to leave with them. He told them that all authority in heaven and in earth had been given to him. He commanded them to go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. They were to teach the converts to do all things whatsoever that Jesus had commanded them and lo he promised that he would be with them always even unto the end of the age.

On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, there were 120 people assembled in the Upper Room waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised he would send after his ascension. Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. After the Holy Spirit fell on them, they spoke in various languages that were not their native tongue and neither had they learned them. People from all over the world heard them praise and honor God in their own tongue and were amazed. They asked what all of this meant. Peter stood and gave the history of the Jewish people from the beginning up to the present and he convinced them that they had killed the Son of God and they needed to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus, and receive the Holy Ghost. Thus the church of God that had been a mystery from the beginning of time was revealed and followers began to believe and receive the promise that Jesus had spoken of while he was

on earth. They were filled with faith, courage, and holy boldness and as they began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, Satan began to send his followers to destroy them.

There was a man named Saul who was zealous in his intent to wipe out the infant church. See Acts chapter 9. However, Saul was converted when he came face to face with the light of Jesus on his way to Damascus to get permission to wipe out the Christians. He was confronted with the truth of who Jesus is and when he stood he was blinded and had to be led by the hand. He obeyed the Holy Spirit and went to the street called Strait at the house of Judas and there he saw in a vision a man named Ananias coming to pray for him. Ananias had heard about the persecution done by the hands of Saul towards the Christian church, but when God told him to go pray for Saul he obeyed and Saul received his sight. From that day forward, Saul was named Paul and became an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ for he preached the pure gospel just as it had been revealed to the other eleven apostles.

Paul had been very careful with his life according to the laws under Moses. In Philippians 3:5, he lists all the things that were important to the Jewish customs and laws and by them, he was faultless. He sincerely wanted to please God. Christ showed him that his works could not save him; what he had thought was important was worthless in the sight of God. He needed to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. In verse 8, he declares that nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus the Lord. He gave up everything else and counted it as worthless. He came to realize that God accepted him simply because of his faith in Christ. From this point on all he wanted to know were Christ and the power that raised him back to life from the dead. He desired to suffer with Christ and to die as he did so that he also would be raised to life when Christ returned.

Paul was convinced that Jesus is the Christ, the light of the world. He preached the way of holiness and held firmly to the message that gives life and he encouraged others to do the same. See Philippians 2:14. He exhorted us to do everything without grumbling or arguing so we can be pure and innocent children of God. He warns that we live among people who are crooked and evil, but we must not do anything that people can point a finger at us to condemn us.

2 Timothy 2:22, Paul instructs Timothy to run from temptations that capture young people. Always do the right thing. Be faithful, loving, and easy to get along with. Worship with people whose hearts are pure. Stay away from stupid and senseless arguments. These only lead to trouble, and God's servants must not be troublemakers. They must be kind to everyone, and they must be good teachers and very patient. Be humble when you correct people who oppose you. Maybe God will lead them to turn to him and learn the truth. They have been trapped by the devil and he makes them obey him, but God may help them escape.

In 2 Timothy 2:11, the true message is given. If we died with Christ, we will live with Christ. If we don't give up, we will rule with him. If we deny that we know him, he will

deny that he knows us. If we are not faithful, he will still be faithful for Christ cannot deny who he is.

In verse 15 it tells us to study and do your best to win God's approval as a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed and who teaches only the true message.

Paul passed on to Timothy what he had received from Jesus Christ. In 2 Timothy 1:11 & 12, he declares that he was appointed to be a preacher, an apostle and a teacher to the Gentiles. He was suffering because of his convictions and his preaching that offended unbelievers. Nevertheless he was not ashamed because he said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." He admonished Timothy to follow the example of the correct teaching that he had given to him and to let the faith and love of Jesus Christ be his model. He told Timothy that he had been entrusted with a wonderful treasure and he should guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives within him. In chapter 2, he reminded Timothy of all the times he had heard Paul teach the Scriptures and now it was going to be his responsibility to carry on the work of Christ after his death. He told him to entrust the gospel with men who could be trusted to teach others the way of truth. We must be willing to endure suffering as a good soldier and not be persuaded to water down the gospel in order to win people's approval. God reveals himself in creation and verbally in Scripture. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul said, "We always thank God that you believed the message that we preached. It came from him and it isn't something made up by humans. You accepted it as God's message and now he is working in you." He went on to say that you may be mistreated by your own people because of your faith in Christ. It was evil people who killed the Lord Jesus Christ and the prophets, and they even chased the Apostles away. They kept the Apostles from teaching the Gentiles about Jesus Christ and hindered them from accepting salvation. There are people who always go too far in their sins. God will judge them when the time comes.

When Jesus was brought before the high priest and questioned about his followers and his teachings, he told them, "I have spoken freely in front of everyone. And I have always taught in our meeting places and in the temple, where all of our people come together. I have not said anything in secret. Why don't you ask the people who heard me? They know what I said."

For these words, Jesus got slapped across his face and rebuked for speaking that way to the high priest. Jesus answered that if he had done something wrong then say so. "But if not, why did you hit me?" Jesus was still tied up and Anna sent him to Caiaphas the high priest.

False religions and teachers try to hide details about their beliefs. They defend their evil doings and cover up their sinful deeds. They love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. John 3:9. They hide behind phrases that sound new, have an innocent ring to it and cover up their intent. President Reagan said to beware of those who would

promote fascism under the guise of being liberal. Beware of those who would deceive people into believing that “Planned Parenthood” is an organization that fights for women’s rights rather than the truth that its main purpose for existence is to murder babies and to sell their body parts for profit and to make money. Preachers who preach false teaching in order to win popularity, get wealthy, gain power, or any other motive other than to win people to the Lord Jesus Christ will one day be judged. The motive behind our actions will make us accountable to God and if we lead people astray, we will suffer consequences.

Galatians 1:8 reads like this: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than what which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” He repeats it in the next verse.” If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Jesus said that he came in his Father’s name and they rejected him. If one comes in his own name they will receive him. John 5:43.

I watched a video of a young man as he stood behind a podium on a platform and talked about a false religion. He had facts that anyone can read and find in the study of history. Yet there were people shouting him down and police had to intervene and lead people from the auditorium.

Christianity is a gospel of love, forgiveness, as well as judgment that is for God to execute. It is about following the perfect example of Jesus Christ; God who took upon himself the form of man to save his people from their sins. He didn’t come to condemn the world, but that through him people could have salvation and eternal life. He has gone to prepare a place for his people. He welcomes and invites us to believe in God and to believe in him. He offers us comfort and peace rather than control through fear and death. We must accept him into our hearts by believing on him for he gives everyone free will and doesn’t force anyone to accept him. He warns us that false shepherds destroy the sheep and scatter them for they forsake them for they care not for the sheep. Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking those whom he may devour. If you want to learn about Satan’s tactics, read the book of Job. His character is spelled out in the Bible. Believe the Word for it says that he is all evil and comes as an angel of light, and his fate is the lake of fire for he is a father of lies and deception. Those who refuse to believe the truth will believe his lies and be damned. John 10, Jeremiah 23.