

April 2013 Newsletter

Escaping The Snare Of The Devil

“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” 2 Timothy 2:26

Intro:

This passage is directed toward believers in Jesus Christ, who through either their own negative volition in rejecting Bible Doctrine, or through their own carelessness allowed themselves to drift away from it, have now been taken captive by Satan and are doing his will in their lives.

Paul outlines the problem in his first letter to Timothy and it dealt with those believers who went after money in their lives and how it ended up for them. *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:10* In this letter he deals with the problem of those, who had defied the authority of the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher, and the end result of that put them under Satan's hold. But he also deals with the remedy for them escaping this snare of the devil!

X. Some needed spiritual qualities of the Pastor-Teacher. v.24

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,” 2 Timothy 2:24 - δουλων δε κυριου ου δει μαχεσθαι αλλ ηπιον ειναι προς παντας διδακτικων ανεξικακων.

The **first thing** that Paul does is remind Timothy that he is a servant of Jesus Christ, and as such, he is to reflect the nature and character of the Lord in his dealing with people. The **next thing** he needs to remember is that the people he is ministering to **belong to Jesus Christ!** These are people that Christ loves and died for, who have been taken captive by the devil, and the goal is to get them free from the grasp of Satan over them!

He then uses the **emphatic no, ou**, combined with the word, *dei*, something one must do, something one has to do, both of which tells us that the Pastor absolutely **must not argue with them**. Sometimes it's hard to do this because of both our natures, ours and those we are ministering to, but we absolutely are not allowed to get into an argument with them.

The word for **strive** is the present middle infinite of *machomai*. *Machomai* was not about a simple disagreement, or difference of opinion, but was a war of words; actually a battle of words. Sometimes it's rendered quarrels.

What we have here are **two opposing viewpoints**. On the one side we have the believer, who has rejected the truth of doctrinal teaching, or some particular doctrine, and on the other side we have the Pastor-Teacher, who stands on the doctrinal position. The two opinions could not be further apart! And no amount of arguing is going to bridge the gap. And remember also, this believer has been taken captive by the devil, so everything that comes out of their mouth is going to reflect the devil's opinion! And as such, there is nothing we can do, humanly speaking, that is going to win them over to the Biblical side. The solution lies in them having a change of mental attitude - not arguing with them.

“But be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,” - *all'epion einai pros pantas didaskikon anexikakon*. Now he begins this with the conjunction of contrast, *alla*, which is used to contrast the idea of instead of arguing with these negative believers, who have been taken captive to do the will of Satan, with how God wants us to deal with them, which is **to deal with them with gentleness and patience**.

The word for **gentle** is *epios*. Now there is a word for **meekness**, *prautes*, which actually is directed toward God's dealings with us, in that we accept his dealings with us as being wise, fair, loving, etc., and we do so without murmurings, arguments, resistance, or resentment. But *epios* deals with one's demeanor when dealing with people. It gets into the idea of the way a person behaves towards others. Arthur Way translates it as being **courteous**, and that's a good one, while the translators also use the word **kind**. The Greek writers used this word to describe a nurse with **trying children**, or teachers dealing with **stubbornly disobedient children, who refuse ordinary methods of treatment**.

The preposition *pros* is used here to denote our personal dealings with, not just these types, but to all people, positive and negative alike, even if they are in opposition to sound doctrine. No blowing our stacks, no flying off the handle, but dealing with them like a patient mother with trying children. And even if they act shamefully toward us, we are still to be courteous toward them.

Obviously this level of grace is not found in the flesh, but is an extra grace given to the Pastor-Teacher, (as he is filled with the Holy Spirit), so he can deal with difficult people as the Lord would and as the Lord wants him to do! Even when their conduct does not deserve it, he is still to have the demeanor and the dealing with them, of a patient nurse, mother, or teacher.

Able to teach is *didaktikon* and it meant to be skillful in teaching, which tells us that the Pastor-Teacher's ministry in the local church is to be one of teaching the Word of God! (I wonder if that's why we find it in his spiritual gift description?). But to be skilled at teaching, one first needs to be properly trained in learning how to exegete the Word, trained in the orthodox doctrines of the Word and then to be active in studying and teaching of the Word.

The word for **patient** is *anexikakon* and it meant to bear evil treatment from others without resentment. Sad to say, this goes with the territory of being a Pastor in a local church, being treated despicably by those you minister to out of love and grace.

The word *anexikakon* was a composite of three words: *ana* – up, *echo* – to hold, and *kakos* – evil. The word for **evil**, *kakos*, refers to that which is evil, or bad, in nature, but it also includes the idea of the effect it has on others. That which is being done to the Pastor is not only evil in nature, or wrong as we would say, but it's also destructive in the effect it has on the Pastor and on his family!

Some translations have translated *anexikakon* as patient, others as not resentful, which is jumping ahead to a conclusion, for it meant to forebear evil treatment. The word **patience** using *makrothumia* takes us into another world, for patience is needed when dealing with people in the ministry in a lot of areas and for many reasons. Why don't they attend class more regularly? Why don't they get their acts together? *Makrothumia* patience meant to not get angry when dealing with people.

But this word goes beyond the ordinary use of patience when dealing with people, for their evil is being directed at you the Pastor! They want to hurt you! They are directing their evil, their hate, their insolence toward you in a destructive way seeking to hurt, or destroy, you, your family and/or your ministry! But we're to bear up under it and move on in faith with the Word.

Y. Opposition to the Pastor-Teacher. v.25

“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;” 2 Timothy 2:25 - εν πραοτητι παιδευοντα τους αντιδιατιθεμενους μηποτε δω αυτοις ο θεος μετανοιαν εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας.

In meekness is *en prauteti* and it refers not to one's outer behavior, but rather towards his mental attitude, his inward disposition. Some words emphasize our behavior, other words our dealings with people, but this word speaks of that which one cannot see for it reveals our frame of mind, our disposition toward God. **It speaks of the soul that is in submission to God's rule over him. It accepts God's dealings with you and it accepts God's provisions for you! Pride turns away from what God provides for us in grace, while meekness humbly and willingly accepts his provisions!**

Toward God, meekness is that frame of mind that accepts God's dealings with you as being good and fair, therefore it does not resist him, it does not fight him, nor argue with him, nor does it resent what he is doing, or allowing, to happen in your life. It is the mental attitude that is oriented toward the love of God, the grace of God and the plan of God, and is in total subjection to his will. As Job said, *“And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: **the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.**” Job 1:21* *“But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? **shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.**” Job 2:10*

The mental attitude of prautes, meekness, toward men bears up under insult and injury knowing that they are working a grace in your soul propelling you toward spiritual maturity and completion. Also, meekness knows that this too could not befall you unless it had been allowed, or directed at you, from God, who also provides you the ministry of the Holy Spirit to carry you through it.

Meekness is closely related to humility showing that the believer is in total subjection to the Father's authority over him. *“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and **giveth grace to the humble.**” 1 Peter 5:5* The epitome of this grace is found in Jesus Christ. *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am **meek** and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:29*

Meekness does not suggest the word as we use it today where an individual portrays a false sense of humility, or is self-effacing, as we see so much of in people who are “religious”, which is nothing more than a front for their legalism, pride and self righteousness. But it defines a mental attitude that is in subjection to God's will for one's life and accepts his authority over him allowing him to do with him as God sees fit. It is pliable clay in the master's hands.

Meekness is not weakness, neither in character, demeanor, or in dealing with people and situations! Many Christians associate meekness with one who is mousy, wimpy, never raising his voice, going around looking half-whipped. If they see a believer, who is bold, dynamic, authoritative and dogmatic they think that he is arrogant, which is not true.

What they don't see is that a man, Pastors included, can be authoritative and dogmatic, which they mistakenly associate with arrogance, and yet **on the inside of his soul be meek before God!** Meekness is that state of mental attitude that one has toward God. And it is from this mental attitude that the Pastor-Teacher must instruct those who oppose him.

He must instruct is the present active participle of *paideuo*. The present participle denotes that instruction in the Word is to be a way of life for the Pastor-Teacher. But this concept does not sit all by itself for it is connected to the idea of **meekness**, *en praoteti paideuonta*. *En plus the locative* tells us that the action of the verb takes place in the sphere of something, which is revealed here as being in the sphere of meekness! The PT is to be teaching the Word of God to his church in the sphere of personal humility before God.

The Pastor-Teacher's soul must not only be in total subjection to the will and authority of God over him, the same as any naval commander would be in total subjection to the admiral of the fleet, but he must also accept whatever comes his way from God and whatever provisions that God supplies to him in life: money, housing, clothing, food, spouse, etc..

Now the communication of the Word can run the gamut from conversational type of teaching all the way to being chewed out. So you can be chewed out by a man who is humble! And his pulpit ministry, which is what his ministry is, is to be continually teaching God's people the Word in the hope that God will grant those in rebellion a change of mental attitude!

The word *paideuo* was used for the household training of children. When used of the PT it denotes that he has the authority to use the mode of communication necessary to chasten with words those who are getting careless, or going away, from the Word. He can gently instruct believers, or he can rebuke them. He can encourage them, or exhort them. But when he does, it is to be done in the sphere of his own personal humility before God.

Paul commanded Timothy, (there's authority again), to correct, rebuke and encourage for the time will come when believers will not put up with sound doctrine. *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”* 2 Timothy 4:2-4 Which is what apostasy is all about.

Those that oppose themselves. The NIV has it as, **“Opponents** must be gently instructed”. The Greek has it as, *tous antidiatithemenous*, which is the present middle participle of *antidiatithemi*. It is a compound verb from *anti* – against, *dia* – the intensive idea, and *tithemi* – to place. The best English word that conveys the idea, although lacking the intensity of the concept, is the word **opponent**.

In the middle voice it has the idea of being reflexive, in that it speaks of believers, who have set **themselves**, against the Pastor of the church. And have gotten to this place where it now has become a pattern for them. And we want to note that it isn't the Pastor, who has brought them to this place, nor the doctrines that he is teaching, but they **themselves** out of their pride and negative volition!

They have put themselves in direct opposition to the doctrinal teaching ministry of the Pastor-Teacher in a local church, either by their speech, and/or their actions. And in so doing they are **in opposition** to the concepts of: the grace of God, the Word and living by faith. The result of which is that they are not only opposing God's grace, by opposing the Pastor he has provided for them, they are **also hurting themselves in the process!** In grace, God forgives us, gives us the indwelling Holy Spirit, provides the teaching of Bible Doctrine revealing to us the spiritual life he has provided for us, and he provides the Pastor-Teacher who teaches the doctrines our souls need. And when they oppose the PT, they are rejecting everything he supplies in his grace!

They have become opponents of the doctrinal ministry of the Pastor-Teacher because they are doing the will of Satan! Somewhere along the line they have become negative to doctrine, or a doctrine he is teaching, and/or they have gone negative to the concept of grace in general, and/or living by faith, and/or metabolizing doctrine by faith (*epignosis*), or have become lifted up in their pride, or acting out on one or more emotional reactor factors, and/or have failed to recover the filling of the Holy Spirit by confessing their sins to God, and/or have been drawn into circles of gossip, or siding with trouble makers, and/or failed to pass their own tests and now have become opponents of the grace Pastor and his teaching ministry. And it has become a way of life for them now. And in so doing they are just hurting themselves.

There are all kinds of “ministers” out there, but they are completely different than the Pastor-Teacher teaching Bible Doctrine on a grace basis in a local church. He and his ministry is God's grace provision for his people, for it is through his doctrinal ministry, (that is to be supplied on a grace basis), that the believer in Christ can learn the needed doctrines on, not only how he or she is to live their lives before God, but in receiving the doctrines they need, that they can metabolize by faith, and continue **living in the spiritual life dynamic** God has provided for them.

It is through the intake of Bible Doctrine that the believer's soul is renewed, strengthened, encouraged, made wise, given faith, given wisdom, receives hope, maintains the sphere of peace, is enabled to go through their trials victoriously, transforms their minds, is empowered to stand against the world system, the flesh nature and the attacks of Satan! So to oppose all that means they they are not only hurting themselves, but that Satan will take them captive, as prisoners of war, to do his will!

If God peradventure will give them repentance - *mepote doe autois ho theos metanoian*. The word for **grant**, “*In the hope that God will grant*”, is the aoist active optative of *didomi*. Now the optative mood is one of the four moods used with if that look at reality. The first class condition is, **if something is true and it is**. The second class is, **if something is true and it isn't**. The third class condition is, **if something is true and it has the potential of being true if certain conditions are met**. And the fourth class is the optative mood and it looks at it from the perspective of, **I wish it was true, or I hope it is true, but often the idea of being doubtful is in it because of the individual's pride, or entrenched negative volition**. It conveys the idea of hope, desire, or wish on the part of the speaker.

When Paul uses the optative mood of God granting them repentance, **he is expressing his heartfelt desire for them**, but it also becomes a **wish** because there is no guarantee on this matter. So the idea of **doubtfulness** comes into play because of the amount of arrogance involved on the part of the rebellious believer in Christ. How so? Because if they were so arrogant that they would get in the face of a Pastor-Teacher, whom God had provided for them in his grace, it's difficult to see them humbling themselves once again under his authority and teaching!

It's possible that they may have a change of mind, but it carries the aspect of doubt that they will, that is in their present arrogant state of mind that God will grant them repentance. You see, in the process of going against the Word of God, and the man who is teaching it, they have made themselves enemies of God and his grace! And it is not a good thing to make yourself an enemy of God! “*But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*” James 4:6 “*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*” 1 Peter 5:5 This now becomes an issue where they must humble themselves before God and petition him to get them on the right track in their thinking and actions centered around his Word and the true Christian life.

We want to note that it is God who grants repentance. The active voice bears this out. One of the negative by-products of Arminianism is that they think that everything centers around them, and that somehow God is their on the sideline awaiting their beck and call and respond to them. It's total self-centeredness and pride.

They are not fully aware of what it means to be saved by grace and that everything God does for us is based upon his grace. He provided the sacrifice for our sins based upon grace; his forgiveness is based upon his grace; the faith to believe on Christ as our Savior is a gift of his grace; the spiritual life dynamic is from his grace; the new man he created in us is from his grace; the Word he gives to us is all of grace; the concept of Bible Doctrine, and the local church with the Pastor-Teacher is all of his grace.

So, whenever a believer neglects, or rejects, the *epignosis* phenomenon of metabolizing Bible Doctrine by faith and goes off pursuing after the things of the world system, the things of the flesh nature, and needs to have a change of mental attitude and get back to the living in the spiritual life, he then needs to petition God for God to grant him a change of attitude toward Doctrine and the Christian way of life.

It's similar to the idea when we get caught up in one sin or another. We need God's forgiveness, we need to be cleansed from our sins, but we need to go to God and acknowledge our sins to him! It's not an automatic thing; we can't order him around in this matter. There is a protocol that must be followed and he outlines this protocol in 1 John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

*If we **acknowledge** our sins*, (to him), now maybe we will and maybe we won't! But if we do, **then** he will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, or wrongdoing. But if we don't, then he won't! It's a **grace function** that is based upon a condition that we must follow, if we want to be forgiven and cleansed.

There is a concept of **repentance** found in Hebrews 6:6, "*If they shall fall away, (drift off course from the grace life), to renew them again unto **repentance**; seeing, (while, or, as long as), they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*". These believers could not get back to this place of repentance because they were caught up in something, in this case, it was going back to the temple system, that they had to stop doing so they could be brought to a place of repentance. "*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,*" Hebrews 6:4

What we need to see is, though, is the true meaning of the concept of **repentance**, which is how the translators translated the Greek *metanoia*, and how it is also tied in with the ideas of **conversion** and **faith**. People have a misunderstanding on this matter of repentance and conversion, and usually distort the meaning of repentance into "feeling sorry" for their sins, which is not the case. To help us in our understanding of what is meant by repentance is seeing, first of all, that there are three Greek words that are generally used in the matter of repentance: **one**, *strepheo*, *epistrepheo* and *apostrepheo* of the *strepheo* word group, **two**, *metanoeo*, and **three**, *metamelomai*.

Conversion comes from the *strepheo* word group: *strepheo*, *epistrepheo*, *apostrepheo* and *anastrepheo*, from which we get the ideas of to turn to, to turn from, to return to and conversion, which is derived from the Latin word conversio – a turning around. It originally came from the idea of **turning the soul to the brightest star in the sky**. The poets and philosophers took the word *strepheo* to denote the turning of the soul to God, and that idea has been its definition ever since.

The word began with the idea of turning and later on it developed into the idea of turning to, or turning toward something. When it was used, the idea of what or whom one was turning to was the important thing, not what one was turning from. And in the Bible it is always God and his Son, Jesus Christ, as the one we are turning our souls to that is of paramount importance, not what we are turning from.

Now if one was caught up in something that was holding them back from turning to God, then *apostrepho* would be used. Of course the important thing is that it is God they are turning to, but in varying situations they are told **to turn from** this or that in their turning to God. Such as in the case of idolatry, “*Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.*” Ezekiel 14:6

So *strepho* in itself meant to turn to God. And whenever the hearer heard the message they knew exactly what was expected of them. The same thing applied with *epistrepho*, especially for believers to turn to God, or to return to God and start drawing near to God. And for us it referred to start living in the spiritual life once again. When *apostrepho* was used it meant the same thing as *epistrepho*, except emphasis was laid on the things that they were involved in that was holding them back, so they needed to turn from these things so they could turn to God. It was all a part of the dynamic of turning.

Metanoeo is another word used in the matter of **repentance**, but the concept behind its meaning is not the turning of the soul, but **a changing of one's thinking and attitude towards God and his Word!** *Strepho* and *metanoeo* were frequently used with each other and often as synonymous terms, but there was a difference. *Strepho* would be the all encompassing term concerning repentance, while *metanoeo* would be the term used that looked at one aspect of it.

Obviously one could not turn to God, or return to him as the case may be, and we're looking at this from the standpoint of Christian's repenting, unless there has been a complete and total change of mind about the believer's involvement in the world system, his flesh nature activity, the things of the devil and his attitude concerning learning Bible Doctrine in a local church.

If the unbeliever is in view there first must be a change of mental attitude about Jesus Christ, who he is, what he's done for us and where the unbeliever stands as a sinner under condemnation, that he's on his way to Hell and that he must come to Christ in faith to be saved. Once he has that change of mental attitude, which is what **repentance** is, then he will turn to Christ and come to him to be saved.

Now when most people hear the word **repent**, they immediately think that means they are to feel sorry for their sins! But that's not what the Greek word *metanoeo* means. *Metanoeo* meant to change the mind, not feel sorry about something. When the Bible was translated into English, the translators chose the English word *repent*, which had its origin from the Middle English word *repenten* from around 1250–1300, which is found in the Old French *repentir* from *re + pentir* - to be contrite, which goes back to the Latin *rēpent* - stem of *rēpēns*, the present participle of rēpere - to crawl, to creep, which resulted in the following present day ideas of what people mistakenly think repentance is all about: to feel remorse for; to be contrite about; show penitence for, to feel sorry, to feel regret, self-reproach, to be contrite for past conduct; regret or be conscience-stricken about a past action, attitude, etc..

Now that's what the English word *repent* means, but that's not what the Greek word *metanoeo*, which is the word used in the Bible, means! *Metanoeo* simply meant to change the mind! Now if one wanted to denote such ideas as feeling sorry for what you have done, feeling regret over past actions, (and we all have had some of those), to feel guilty, or to have remorse and sorrow, and even to connote acts of penance, then there is a Greek word that addresses those ideas and it's *metamelomai!*

But here's where we have to make an important distinction. It does not follow that if one has had a change of mental attitude, that they will necessarily regret their actions! Repentance, *metanoeo*, does not always end up in feeling sorry over something. And it does not follow that just because one regrets what they have done that they have had a change of mental attitude! Repentance does not always mean there is regret and regret does not mean that there has been repentance, as was the case with Judas.

Here we get into the psychological makeup of different people, when we talk about the idea of regret versus repentance. Some people's repentance will be accompanied by tears, sorrow and regret. While other people's repentance will not be accompanied by any of them! Yet they both have the same thing in common; they have had a change of mental attitude toward God, his Son and his Word. People are different and how they react emotionally to certain things differs from person to person.

In many Christian circles today the whole emphasis is placed on feeling sorry for one's sins in this matter of repentance, (another carry over from the mother goddess cult), which really gets into the idea of regret. **But regretting your actions, even when accompanied by tears, does not mean that you have had a change of mind!** See Esau and Judas as examples of that.

We want to emphasize an important concept in a believer having a change of mind and that is **this change of mind will want to know the truth!** They will now want to know the truth, serve the truth, and pursue after the truth their entire lives. Truth will be paramount in their lives! Not a religious denomination, not after some particular school of theology – but the truth.

Another concept found in having true repentance, that is, a true change of mind, is that **it will result in the individual having an *epignosis* knowledge of God's Word.** *Epignosis* knowledge comes from the believer in Christ metabolizing the teaching of God's Word by faith. “*In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*” 2 Timothy 2:25 “*Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.*” 2 Timothy 2:25 NIV

When an **unbeliever repents** and believes on Christ as his Savior, a changing of the mind, turning to Christ and believing on him, then that new believer will be brought to a local church by the Holy Spirit where he can sit under the teaching of the Word of God and start metabolizing it by faith. His change of mind has resulted in him getting *epignosis* doctrine.

When a **believer in Christ** has got away from the Word, drifted off course in his life, gone back out into the world, got wrapped up in carnal living, or simply got involved in some church group that doesn't teach the Word of God, and I mean teach, where its format isn't entertainment, programs, etc., but teaching Bible doctrine, and he or she has a change of mental attitude, (true repentance), that believer will end up under a church ministry that does teach the Word resulting in *epignosis* for them.

But, as we have seen, God has to grant repentance to the believer in Christ. Paul could only put this in the optative mood to reflect his desire for these believers, because he couldn't say that they would for sure, or that they wouldn't, nor could he lay out a certain condition to be fulfilled by them that would result in repentance. We see God operating in this matter many times in the OT. “**Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.**” Lamentations 5:21 It is God who first initiates in grace toward man, even in the area of repentance, but man can resist and reject this gracious act of kindness toward him. Man still does have free will.