

Look Out and Look Up!

Romans 16:17-27

Thought for the Day: In these last days of the Church Age, we must look out and watch for false teachers who would lead us astray by smooth talk and flattery and we must look up and worship God who will establish and keep us in the faith by means of His Word.

I. Some Friends to Greet (vss. 1-16) – *Look Around and Welcome!*

II. Some Foes to Avoid (vss. 17-20) – *Look Out and Watch!*

17 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.

- A warning against false teachers.
 - Watch out for = to mark, identify, be aware of; to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to. Keep your eye on... (*NASB*). To keep a close eye on something that can do serious harm to you!
- How do we identify them?
 - 1) They cause divisions in the body; and 2) They teach false doctrines that are contrary to the Word of God, that cause people to stumble and fall.
 - We must carefully evaluate what they teach in the light of the Word of God. (Cp. Acts 17:11)
- Keep away from them!
 - To shun; to avoid; to turn away from. Have nothing to do with them.
 - "We have the same problem today, and Christians must beware of false teachers. They come to your front door with magazines, books, and tapes, trying to convince you that they are teaching the truth. Paul gives two instructions: Mark them (identify them), and avoid them. It is a matter of obedience to the Lord and testimony to others." (*Warren Wiersbe, Be Right, p. 183*)

18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites.

- Their motives: they are not serving Christ but their own sinful, selfish, lustful desires.

By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

- Their methods: they appeal to "itching ears". (Cp. 2 Timothy 4:1-5)

19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

- Be wise = be experts in what is good.
- Be Innocent = be inexperienced in what is evil.
 - We don't have to experience something to know that it's evil and harmful!

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

- Soon = with quickness and speed; suddenly. When Satan's end comes, as described in Revelation 20:10, it will come suddenly and without fanfare.
- False teachers are agents of and partners with Satan. They will suffer the same fate.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

III. Some Faithful Servants to Honor (vss. 21-27) – *Look Up and Worship!*

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you,

- Paul's son in the faith; traveling companion; partner in ministry. Cp. Philippians 2:19-24.

as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

22 I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

- Tertius = "third". Paul's secretary. He wrote the letter as Paul dictated it.

23 Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

- Gaius apparently provided hospitality to Christians traveling through Corinth.
- He made his house available as a gathering place for the believers.

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works,

- The town manager or treasurer.

and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.

- Quartus = "Fourth." "Third and Fourth" were slaves who had been set free in Christ.

25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ,

- A doxology of praise to God.
- Establish = to make stable; to set firmly in place; to anchor in place.
 - We are living in very unstable times and, according to the Bible, it will only get worse. It is the Word of God that will give us stability and enable us to stand firm.
 - In Romans 1:11, Paul expressed his desire to see the believers in Rome, "...that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen (establish) you..." (*ESV*)
 - Pastors and Bible teachers are certainly instruments that God can and does use to strengthen us and build us up in our faith. But ultimately, as Paul recognized, "Only God can establish believers in their faith so that they cannot be moved." (*Erdman, Romans, p. 159*)
- Christ is to be the continual focus of our preaching and teaching. (1 Cor. 1:23; Col. 1:28)

according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings

- We are established in our faith in accordance with and by means of God's revelation to us in His Word.

by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ was "hidden for long ages past"; it has been "revealed and made known through the prophetic writings"; and it is now our privilege and responsibility to proclaim it to the nations "so that all nations might believe and obey him..."

27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

- We glorify God and advance His kingdom by making disciples of Jesus Christ in all nations.