

Don't Compromise Your Convictions

July 11, 2010

Turn to **1 Corinthians 16:13**. I'm going to read from the Message Bible, because I like the way it translates. "Keep your eyes open." We cannot walk through this world with our eyes shut. We have to keep our eyes open. We have to know what is happening. You have to know how the enemy is approaching you, your family, your life, your walk, your calling, because the enemy is out to bring destruction. He is a thief.

"Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions." You have to know what convictions are, and your convictions have to be Bible-based. **A conviction is a fixed and firm belief in the Bible, in the blood (of Jesus), and in the blessed hope.**

When I say that you have to have a firm, fixed belief in the Bible, I'm talking about from Genesis to Revelation. This is the authority. This is not just some men's suggestions as to how you should live. This is **God's Holy Word, and it is authentic**. It deals with **absolutes**. "You **MUST** be born again."

When you have a conviction about the blood, it doesn't just deal with Christ dying on the cross. It also deals with **His supernatural virgin birth and His sinless life**. He did not commit sin. "He was without sin among men." Isn't that amazing?

Then, He literally hung on a cross, literally bled and died, literally was buried, and literally came forth from the dead. So you have to believe in the Book, you have to believe in the blood, and you have to believe in the blessed hope. That's the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I don't know if you know this or not, but He is literally coming again, and every eye shall see Him. AMEN?

So convictions are our fixed, firm, unshakable beliefs, convictions deal with absolutes, and convictions deal with the core values of our lives. Quit living sloppy lives, and I'm not talking about preferences. In the church world, we have preferences. We have different ways of doing things. One group thinks their way is the only way, and they battle over their preferences; but **convictions are your core values**: what you say, what you think, your lifestyle.

I don't know if you know this or not, but being a Christian is not just an experience at the altar asking the Lord to forgive you. Then you get up and live any old way you want to live. No, no, no. If you are a Christian, you are a follower of Jesus; and Jesus told people to follow in His footsteps.

Your convictions are the essentials of the Christian faith. When you tell me that you don't believe in the virgin birth, we separate. When you tell me that you believe Jesus sinned, we separate. When you tell me the blood is not important, we separate. I'm talking about the **essentials**. When you tell me the Bible is full of errors, we separate, because there are certain things that are non-negotiable. Don't make your preferences your convictions. Make your convictions Bible-based!

"Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you've got, be resolute (determined not to compromise your convictions), and love without stopping." What happens a lot of times when people deal with their convictions is that they get mean. Their fangs come out, but everything we do in our walk with Jesus has to be motivated by love. Love allows you to serve God. It's what allows you to fulfill your divine calling, and love isn't for show.

Compromise is Satan's deadliest attack on believers, and his attacks are usually **subtle**. He doesn't just turn the lights off all at once. He gets you to take just a little step toward compromising. He tells you that little step won't matter much, that it won't bother you. He just dims the lights a little bit and then backs off. Pretty soon you're in darkness, thinking you're walking in light, and isn't it amazing how we can rationalize our decisions?

Look at **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**. Listen to these words. "Don't become partners with those who reject God. How can you make a partnership out of right and wrong? That's not partnership, that's war. Is light best friends with darkness? (The answer is no!) Does Christ go strolling with the devil? (The answer is no!) Do trust and mistrust hold hands? (The answer is no!) Who would think of setting up pagan idols in God's holy Temple?" That would have been an abomination.

"But that is exactly what we are, each of us a temple in whom God lives. God Himself put it this way. 'I'll live in them, move into them. I'll be their God and they will be My people. So leave the corruption and compromise, leave it for good,' says God. Don't link up with those who will pollute you." What does that mean? Be cautious of whom you hang with!

"I want you all for Myself. I'll be a Father to you, you'll be sons and daughters to Me. The Word of the Master, God."

Let's look at **the causes of compromise**. I'll tell you what causes compromise. **(1) The**

fear of man. Peer pressure. We live in a culture that is hell-bound, because this culture is trying to mold us into its image. The god of this world is Satan. He has blinded the eyes of society, and he is trying to press the church into the mold of the world.

I just received this report. A North Carolina Baptist pastor was relieved of his duties as the chaplain of the State House of Representatives in North Carolina. Let me tell you why he was relieved of his duties as chaplain. At the end of his prayer, he used the name of Jesus, and he was fired. He had been invited to lead prayer for an entire week, but his tenure was cut short when he refused to remove the name of Jesus from his prayer.

This did not happen in Moscow. We're not talking about China. We're talking about in the middle of the Bible Belt! How many of you people think that a Muslim would not have invoked Allah in his prayer? How many of you think someone in the legislature would have told him he couldn't use Allah's name? This war is all about Jesus! Yes, it is. It isn't about God. It's about Jesus claiming to be God, and He is!

This man was under pressure. He was just a little peon, a little preacher. They're a dime a dozen, but this man would not compromise. Let me ask you this. How many gutless wonders, who call themselves preachers, would have rationalized and said, "Well, I don't want to offend anybody. The Lord will understand." No, He won't!

Jesus said, "When you pray to My Father, use My name; and anything you ask My Father in My name, He will do it for you." If you are a Christian, there is only one way you pray, and that is in the name of Jesus! **Proverbs 29:25** says, "The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be (safe and) secure."

Peer pressure will try and to get you to compromise, but you cannot compromise your convictions; and when you step into compromise, certain things happen. Another cause of compromise is **(2) false teaching**. False teaching says that now that you are saved, you can do anything you want to do. That is not scriptural.

Jesus didn't save you just so you could do anything you want to do, go anywhere you want to go, dress any way you want to dress, and talk like the devil. No, no, no. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. Touch not the unclean thing, and you will be My sons and My daughters."

2 Peter 2:1 says, "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there

will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who brought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction."

Christian television is awesome. It's wonderful, but aren't you tired and weary of the manipulation to give money? Aren't you weary of the man that tries to sell you a miracle for \$1,000? Don't you kind of feel like he thinks you're stupid? These are false teachers and false prophets trying to manipulate us. If you haven't gotten the book, "The Holy Ghost Is Not For Sale," buy it.

There was a meeting where the host was introducing the speaker, and the host said, "Now, this man I'm introducing to you is more than an apostle." Then this host says, "He is greater than an apostle." That would have gotten my attention. Then the host says, "In order to release his anointing on you tonight, everybody bow down before him." At that moment, I would have been gone!

The Bible clearly says that we bow our knees only unto the Lord your God. We don't bow them to a preacher, a prophet, or to the pope. No, no, no. I'm not kissing anyone's ring. I'm telling you truth, and when you know truth it sets you free.

The Presbyterians USA started their general assembly meeting in Minnesota this past Monday, and they just voted in that all of their ordained gays and lesbians have full rights to be preachers. That is not scriptural. I can hear people saying, "You're not being tolerant." That is a word from the devil to make you back up.

Listen, everyone is welcome at Maranatha; but when you get into God's house, **holiness** is required! I don't know if you know this or not, but the minimum standard in the family of God is **holiness**. "For without holiness, no man will see the Lord."

The Presbyterians have come a long way from what they used to believe, but they came within a few votes from accepting same-sex marriage. They can bless same-sex marriage, but nothing more. That is not scriptural. Marriage is between a man and a woman. You can't bend God's Word. **False teaching will lead you to compromise.**

I know that not everybody here likes what I'm preaching. Well, God didn't call me to preach what you like. He called me to preach what His Word says! If you are preaching in order to be liked, you had better get out of the ministry. **The fear of man and false teaching lead to compromise.**

Also, **(3) flesh-walking** will lead to compromise. Look at what **Romans 8:8** says. "Those

who are in the flesh cannot please God." The church is full of flesh-walkers. This is their philosophy. If it feels good, then do it.

I don't know if you know this or not, but the Bible says that the marriage bed is undefiled. I know that our culture is for abortion, but I'm against it. Our culture is for same-sex marriage, but I'm against it. The Bible is against it. Our culture says if it feels good, do it, but the Bible is against it. The marriage bed is undefiled. Anything else is fornication, and that is sin!

When you are in the midst of this flesh pulling you and drawing you, if you could just look down the road and see the consequences of compromising. Fulfilling the urges of the flesh have consequences connected to it, but we live in the moment today. We don't look down the road at the consequences to sin, and there are always consequences to sin.

In West Virginia, we have thousands of children that have to be taken care of by the welfare system because of flesh-walking. You wouldn't believe how many children are in foster care. The majority of that deals with flesh-walking, fulfilling the urges of the flesh.

The **consequences of compromising** are massive. Look at what **Romans 14:23 [NLT]** says. "But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning." Paul is telling them that if something has been offered to an idol, and then you eat that offering, it is sin. "But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning." He that knows to do right and does it not, is sinning.

People sin and then say, oh well, God will forgive me. What you ought to say is, God doesn't want me to do that, and I'm going to resist that. If you resist the devil, he will flee from you. God help us! Yes, God is a forgiving God, and thank God for His grace; but God doesn't save you so that you can live a sloppy life.

Compromise will cripple your character. I believe in all the gifts of the Spirit. You may not, but I do; but God does not want you to idolize gifted people who have no character. **Compromise will corrode your courage.** Once you rationalize and start taking those little steps of compromise that lead to destruction, you become too cowardly to take a stand.

Compromise will crush your testimony. True-blue followers of Jesus can discern those who have the talk but no walk. **Compromise will choke your praise.** Out in the world you act one way, but in church you don't even want to lift your hands. The Bible says, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." You say that's not your style. It doesn't matter what your style is. It's what the Bible says.

"Clap your hands, all ye people; and shout with a voice of triumph." When you come through those doors, you ought to already be pumped up. You're on your way to Heaven. You have been forgiven, but compromise will choke that praise.

Compromise will corrupt your thinking. When you begin compromising, your thinking starts changing. Isn't it amazing what used to be wrong for you is now ok? **Compromise will control your conduct. Compromise will turn you into a counterfeit Christian.**

Adam and Eve compromised the one law God gave them. They listened to Satan and lost paradise. They passed death, cancer, arthritis down to all of us because of one man's sin. They paid a heavy price, and you will too.

Esau compromised his convictions and lost his birthright. Esau was the first-born of Isaac, and in Judaism the first-born received a double portion of the blessing. The Bible says that every first-born that comes from the womb is consecrated to God. Esau's flesh took over, and he sold his double blessing for a bowl of beans. He compromised his convictions and lost his birthright.

Samson compromised his convictions for a woman. We think of Samson as this massive, muscle-bound man, but it wasn't his muscles that made him strong. It was his God that made him strong! God told his mother and father that they were to raise him a certain way, because he was chosen by God. So he made certain vows as a young man not to do certain things, but he compromised his promises. When he laid his head in the lap of Delilah, **he lost his strength, he lost his sight, and he lost his freedom.**

Judas literally was with Jesus for 3.5 years, but **he compromised his convictions and sold out his Lord for 30 pieces of silver.** How much less has the church sold Him out?

Keeping our convictions help us develop into whom we are supposed to be. When we keep our Bible-based convictions, it gives us **stability.** Do any of you know that this world is in trouble? Our economic system could collapse at any minute. I know most of you don't watch the news or follow the stock market, but the stock market affects everybody in the house. What are you going to do when this world starts reeling and

rocking, and you have no stability? What your convictions have been is where your stability lies.

Maturity does not come forth from miracles. Keeping your convictions helps to develop your **maturity**. Convictions help develop **Christ-likeness** in our lives. Convictions develop **integrity**. Convictions develop our **character**. It's who we are. We have to keep our commitments without compromising our convictions.

Daniel was a great man. Look at **Daniel 1:8**. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." Jewish boys were captured and brought into Babylon, and the Babylonians tried to brain-wash them. They tried to change their diet, because the Jews would only eat a certain way, but Daniel had convictions. He was not going to defile himself with the food of the kings of Babylon.

They also changed their names. The Babylonians had to change their identities in order to disconnect them from Jehovah God. So they were given Babylonian names that dealt with Baal, but **Daniel would not compromise his convictions**. So they made a law that no one could pray to Jehovah God, but in his room Daniel stood before his open windows and prayed toward Jerusalem. He wanted God to know that he was not going to succumb to the pressure of the Babylonians.

In **Daniel 6:10-12**, he opened his windows and began to pray, and tattle-talers went and tattled on him. So they threw him into a lions den. When you keep your convictions, you are going to suffer persecution. Sooner or later, every believer, every follower of Jesus will have to take a stand.

In **Matthew 5:10** from the Message Bible, Jesus says, "You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom."

When the king came to check on Daniel the next day, he found out that Daniel was alive; because during the night (**Verse 22**) God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. **When you take a stand for God, God will take a stand for you!**

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were told that they had to bow down to a golden idol, but they would not bow. So in **Daniel 3:19**, King Nebuchadnezzar commanded that they be thrown into a fiery furnace seven times hotter than it usually was heated. They said, you can make it as hot as you want to, but we are not bowing down. Look at what they say in **Verse 17**.

"If that is the case, our *God* whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king." **Verse 18:** "But if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

The men that threw them into the furnace were burned up because it was so hot, and when the king looked in, he said in **Verse 24**, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said to the king, 'True, O king.'" **Verse 25:** "Look! he answered, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Wow!

Joseph refused to compromise his convictions when Potiphar's wife tempted him with sex. He was falsely accused. He fled, and he was put in prison. The Bible says the Lord never forsook him. It may not be seen by man, but **your personal integrity will always be rewarded by God.**

I challenge everyone in this culture in which we live to **dare to be different.** **Psalm 119:3** from the New Living Translation says, "They do not compromise with evil and they walk only in His paths." Don't compromise with evil. Walk only in the ways of the Lord.