

## Remnant Life Church

August 9, 2015

### The Signs of the Times: Dealing with Deception

I John 2:21-24

Last Week:

- Deception = a lie
  - A lie is only as effective as the amount of truth that it holds
  - A pure, 100% lie is easy to spot; it must seem enough like the truth to bring doubt
  - The source of all deception is Satan (John 8:44 – father of lies)
  - This is why we are told in the 10 Commandments not to lie because it opens our lives to the enemy
  - John's book of Revelation tells us that in the last days the Antichrist and the False Prophet will deceive many by their words and actions
    - # The deceptive words will be words of unity and peace
    - # The deceptive actions will be supernatural power appearing to be like God
- John warns us that the last days will be characterized by a great increase in deception
  - He also writes (John 10:10) that all Satan wants is to steal, kill, and destroy God's people
    1. Steal your Joy in Christ
    2. Kill your heaven-bound spirit
    3. Destroy your right as a child of God to exercise all that we have been given to overcome the temptations and hardships of this life
  - How does he accomplish this? Through deception!
- **READ – I John 2:21-24**
- What does the deception look like and who does it target?
  - He targets every Christian
  - This is not to say that if you have been deceived that you are a poor Christian
  - We all struggle with and experience times of these weaknesses

#### 1. The seekers or new believers

- + He first tries to convince people to ignore God altogether
- + This continues to apply to each of us because, even as Christians, we continue to seek more of God
- + The 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said, "God is dead"
- + Interestingly he suffered a complete breakdown and loss of his mental capabilities at the age of 44 - *The arrogant cannot stand in your presence.* (Psalm 5:5)
- + April 8, 1966 – Time magazine cover asking, "Is God Dead?" (A deception with truth)
- + The *truth* of God's existence is stated but the laughable *deception* is that man can kill God
- + So the deception is that if God is "dead" there is no need to seek Him – instead we should seek to escape

+ This is at the heart for the excesses of life – to try and escape the realities of life without God

## 2. He targets the spiritually ignorant

- + Ignorant does not mean stupid but uninformed
- + The New Age movement is embraced by those who do not know the Word enough to distinguish between the true and the false
- + Transcendental Meditation; Dianetics; Unity; Taoism; ufology; crystalology; goddess worship; reincarnation; scientology; harmonics; numerology; astrology; holistic healing; “positive thinking” philosophies
- + All of these increasing variations simply testify to the failure of modern-day secular humanism to present itself as the solution to the spiritual hunger of the soul
- + The words of Augustine of Hippo the 4<sup>th</sup> century philosopher are most appropriate: “You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” Or, as the 17<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher Pascal put it, “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man, and only God can fill it.”
- + Not only does New Age present the foolishness of trusting and relying on a frail, finite, and limited creature but it desires to separate us from the true and authentic source
- + We are created and designed to have a personal relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ
- + Shirley MacLaine wrote on the last page of her biography “Out on a Limb” these words, “I know that I exist, therefore I am. I know that the god source exists therefore it is. Since I am a part of that force, then I am that I am.”
- + This is the very height of blasphemy to make yourself equal with God (*Exodus 3:14*)

## 3. He targets the spiritually wounded

- + The church, in spite of how much we talk about loving one another, does not always do a very good job of taking care of the hurting
- + Wounded people within the church come in one of two ways:
  1. They arrive wounded from some other source
  2. They are hurt within the church itself
- + The church must be a place where we demonstrate compassion; patience; kindness; love to one another
- + *John 13:35* - *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*
- + *I John 4:7-21* – John tells this church that they should love one another because of God’s love for them
- + We believe that this is one of the purposes that God brought Remnant Life Church into existence
- + Not to enable but to foster and encourage healing



+ But I also believe that the mark of a maturing Christian is one who does not allow so many things to hurt their feelings – so many issues in the church could be avoided if we acknowledged that we simply need to grow up!

#### 4. He targets the spiritually naïve

- + Through the years there has been misguided teaching that once you become a Christian all your problems will be over
- + There is also teaching that God gives us whatever we ask him for whenever we ask Him
- + These are deceptions
- + Paul clearly tells us that is not the case
  - ^ After his conversion Paul had no idea how hard his life would be
  - ^ God told Ananias - *I will show him how much he must suffer for my name* (John 9:16)
  - ^ 2 Corinthians 11 Paul recounts what he has had to endure – not in complaint but in joy and victory
- + We are not promised a life free of difficulty or of riches simply because we ask for them (the danger of the preaching of the prosperity gospel)
- + God answers our prayers according to the condition of our hearts when we pray and according to His will.
- + Are you willing to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit or will give you a place to the voice of deception?
- + His voice, His will may take you on a journey that you would never think of for yourself - William Borden

In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden family fortune, he was already wealthy. For his high school graduation present, his parents gave 16-year-old Borden a trip around the world. As the young man traveled through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, he felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, Bill Borden wrote home about his "desire to be a missionary." One friend expressed disbelief that Bill was "throwing himself away as a missionary." In response, Borden wrote two words in the back of his Bible: "No reserves."

Even though young Borden was wealthy, he arrived on the campus of Yale University in 1905 trying to look like just one more freshman. Very quickly, however, Borden's classmates noticed something unusual about him and it wasn't that he had lots of money. One of them wrote: "He came to college far ahead, spiritually, of any of us. He had already given his heart in full surrender to Christ and had really done it. We who were his classmates learned to lean on him and find in him a strength that was solid as a rock, just because of this settled purpose and consecration." During his college years, Bill Borden made an entry in his personal journal that defined what his classmates were seeing in him. That entry said simply: "Say 'no' to self and 'yes' to Jesus every time."

During his first semester at Yale, Borden started something that would transform campus life. One of his friends described how it began: "It was well on in the first term when Bill and I began to pray together in the morning before breakfast. I cannot say positively whose suggestion it was, but I feel sure it must have originated with Bill. We had been meeting only a short time when a

third student joined us and soon after a fourth. The time was spent in prayer after a brief reading of Scripture. Bill's handling of Scripture was helpful. . . . He would read to us from the Bible, show us something that God had promised and then proceed to claim the promise with assurance." Borden's small morning prayer group gave birth to a movement that soon spread across the campus. By the end of his first year, 150 freshmen were meeting weekly for Bible study and prayer. By the time Bill Borden was a senior, one thousand of Yale's 1,300 students were meeting in such groups.

Borden made it his habit to seek out the most "incorrigible" students and try to bring them to salvation. Bill's friend continues his account, "In his sophomore year we organized Bible study groups and divided up the class of 300 or more, each man interested taking a certain number, so that all might, if possible, be reached. The names were gone over one by one, and the question asked, 'Who will take this person?' When it came to someone thought to be a hard proposition, there would be an ominous pause. Nobody wanted the responsibility. Then Bill's voice would be heard, 'Put him down to me.'"

Borden's outreach ministry was not confined to the Yale campus. He cared about widows and orphans and the disabled. He rescued drunks from the streets of New Haven. To try to rehabilitate them, he founded the Yale Hope Mission. One of Bill Borden's friends wrote that he "might often be found in the lower parts of the city at night, on the street, in a cheap lodging house or some restaurant to which he had taken a poor hungry fellow to feed him, seeking to lead men to Christ."

Borden's missionary call narrowed to the Muslim Kansu people in China. Once he fixed his eyes on that goal, Borden never wavered. He also challenged his classmates to consider missionary service. One of them said of him: "He certainly was one of the strongest characters I have ever known, and he put backbone into the rest of us at college. There was real iron in him, and I always felt he was of the stuff martyrs were made of, and heroic missionaries of more modern times."

Although he was a millionaire, Bill seemed to "realize always that he must be about his Father's business, and not wasting time in the pursuit of amusement." Although Borden refused to join a fraternity, "he did more with his classmates in his senior year than ever before." He presided over the huge student missionary conference held at Yale and served as president of the honor society Phi Beta Kappa. Upon graduation from Yale, Borden turned down several high-paying job offers and in his Bible, he wrote two more words: "No retreats."

William Borden went on to do graduate work at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. When he finished his studies at Princeton, he sailed for China. Because he was hoping to work with Muslims, he stopped first in Egypt to study Arabic. While there, he contracted spinal meningitis. Within a month, 25-year-old William Borden was dead.

When the news of William Whiting Borden's death was cabled back to the U.S., the story was carried by nearly every American newspaper. In the introduction of his biography author Mary Taylor wrote, "A wave of sorrow went round the world . . . Borden not only gave (away) his wealth, but himself, in a way so joyous and natural that it (seemed) a privilege rather than a sacrifice".

Was Borden's untimely death a waste? Not in God's perspective. Prior to his death, Borden had written two more words in his Bible. Underneath the words "No reserves" and "No retreats," he had written: "No regrets."