

Beware of Pseudo-Christians

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Today we will speak about false characters in the church (worldwide), including false believers.

- As genuine believers, we have to guard against falsity of any kind in the life of the church
- We must ensure that everyone and everything is genuine and authentic

2 Timothy 1:5 (NKJV) *When I call to remembrance **the genuine faith that is in you**, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.*

- Apostle Paul speaks of Timothy's genuine faith

1 Timothy 1:5 (D-R) *Now the end of the commandment is charity from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an **unfeigned faith**.*

- Unfeigned faith – not a pretend faith, but a sincere, authentic faith

Romans 12:9 (ESV) *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*

- NKJ – *Let love be without hypocrisy*

Apostle Paul speaks about danger from false believers

2 Corinthians 11:26 (NIV) *I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and **in danger from false believers**.*

Paul lists various sources of dangers that he faced in his life as a Christian, and in his ministry as an apostle. His list includes danger from false believers.

The Bible speaks about:

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| • False apostles | (2 Cor. 11:13) | Gr. <i>pseudapostolos</i> |
| • False prophets | (Matt. 24:11) | Gr. <i>pseudoprophetes</i> |
| • False christs | (Matt. 24:24) | Gr. <i>pseudochristos</i> |
| • False teachers | (2 Peter 2:1) | Gr. <i>pseudodidaskalos</i> |

- False witnesses (Matt. 26:60) Gr. pseudomartur
- **False brethren (2 Cor. 11:26) Gr. *pseudadelphos***

The question (rhetorical) is: Where are all these people?

Greek “Pseudo” – false, pretend

- to lie & speak deliberate falsehoods
- to deceive others by a lie
- a conscious and intentional falsehood
- whatever is not what it seems to be

Pseudo, or false Christians – who, or what they are NOT:

Pseudo Christians are NOT:

- Pre-Christians (not a Christian yet, unsaved, a spiritually lost people)
- Seekers (unsaved people who’s heart is stirring, & who are looking for God)
- Young immature Christians who are still struggling with issues of the flesh
- Backslidden Christians

Descriptions of a false believer:

- A false believer is an unsaved person who has, or is trying to infiltrate a community of genuine believers, but he himself only pretends to be a believer
- He does not have a living faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore has no personal relationship with God (he doesn’t want a relationship with God)
- His feigned faith is not genuine - it is a pretend pseudo faith
- His motives for wanting to be among Christians are definitely not pure
- (Their motives are usually to gain the trust of genuine believers, for personal gain, for personal advantage, for extracting money, etc. etc.)
- His “talk” is clever, and his “walk” is feigned
- As there is such a thing called “street-wise”, so there is a thing called “church-wise”

Galatians 2:4-5 (NIV) *This matter arose because **some false believers had infiltrated our ranks** to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. **5** We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.*

- ... **some false believers had infiltrated our ranks** ...
- In this matter, it had to do with a question about the practice of their faith
- In oppressive regimes, government agents are sent to spy on Christians (for incriminating information, etc.)

- In NZ, it would not be inconceivable for “agents” to be sent into churches to spy concerning “misinformation”, mask wearing, social distancing, etc.

It is not always what it seems to be

- We get excited when new people come to church looking for God, and so we should be!
- However, not everyone who turns up at our doorstep comes with pure intentions
- If you are a young Christian, you need not worry – God has placed shepherds over God’s flock, to guard His people, and watch over them
- Sometimes, leaders of a church make certain decisions which are not always understood by everyone – which cannot be explained publicly
- But typically, in Christ-honouring & Spirit-led churches, these decisions are made with the spiritual safety of God’s people in mind

Apostle John speaks about false believers (and false teachers):

1 John 2:18–19 (NCV) *My dear children, these are the last days. You have heard that the enemy of Christ is coming, and now **many enemies of Christ are already here**. This is how we know that these are the last days. **19 These enemies of Christ were in our fellowship**, but they left us. **They never really belonged to us**; if they had been a part of us, they would have stayed with us. **But they left, and this shows that none of them really belonged to us.***

- The enemy of Christ is coming – that’s the antichrist
- The enemies of Christ are already here – those with an antichrist spirit in their life
- ***These enemies of Christ were in our fellowship, but they left us***
- John used the terms “them” and “us”
- “They” left us – none of them every really belonged to “us”

Down through the age of the Christian church, many false characters had infiltrated various churches. Two of them were Hymaeus and Alexander during the days of apostle Paul.

1 Timothy 1:18–20 (NKJV) *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, **19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck**, **20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.***

- Hymenaeus and Alexander had rejected faith & a good conscience
- It seems that they were two “post-Christians” who had lost their salvation

2 Timothy 4:14-15 (NKJV) *Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.*

- When a supposed believer does much harm to a genuine minister of the gospel, or to a local church, we have every right to question the genuineness of their faith

1 Peter 1:6–9 (NKJV) *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that **the genuineness of your faith**, being much more precious than gold that perishes, **though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation** (2nd Coming) **of Jesus Christ, 8** whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 **receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.***

- Only someone with a genuine faith will receive the salvation of their soul