

Message #50 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Playing Make-Believe"

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Well, let's go on with today's message. Today I'd like to talk to you about being separate. Let's take a look at 2 Corinthians, chapter 6. I'm going to read verses 14 through 18. It says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Notice verse 14. This is an interesting statement. Being yoked together is a description of a pair of oxen which are connected by a double yoke in order to accomplish some task, such as pulling a plow, cart, or wagon. But this scripture is referring to Christians, and it's telling us that if we're walking alongside unbelievers, involved in the same things they are involved in, that we are out of the will of God. And the rest of verse 14, along with verses 15 and 16, asks five rhetorical questions. The five questions are, what fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness, what communion does light have with darkness, and what agreement does Christ have with Belial? What part does a believer have with an unbeliever, and what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? The answers to each of these five questions is, of course, that there is no fellowship of righteousness with unrighteousness. There can't be. Neither can there be communion between light and darkness, or agreement between Christ and Belial, which is another name for Satan, in the sense of worthlessness. Nor can a believer have any part with an unbeliever, and there can also be no agreement between the temple of God and idols. Christians are not supposed to be in one accord with unbelievers. Yes, we have to be in the world, and there are things which we cannot separate ourselves from, yet we must draw the line between righteousness and wickedness. In Ephesians 5:11, Paul writes that we are not to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Notice that what is expressly forbidden is not fellowship with unbelievers, but fellowship with works of darkness, because these works are not fruitful. They do not bear any fruit of righteousness.

We know that the things of God cannot go together with the things of Satan. We know that heavenly things do not go together with earthly things. Colossians 3:2, says, "Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth." And verse three, says, "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Heavenly things and earthly things are opposed to one another. James 4:4, says that the world is enmity with God. The word enmity, means, deep-seated mutual hatred. This means that God has a deep-seated hatred for the world, in the sense that God hates everything of the world which does not give glory to him. In the same sense, the whole worldly concept is hatefully apposed to anything even remotely connected with God. If you don't see this, just think for a moment how television programming has slowly but relentlessly pushed anything that is related to God out of the mainstream network programming. Notice how the governments of this world more and more are aligning themselves with the anti-Christian approach. The world is at odds with the things of God just as much as the things of God are at odds with the things of the world. Between the things of God and the things of the world, there is mutual hatred. And it is not just a mild disagreement between God and the world, but it is a deep-seated hatred. God hates the world, and the world hates God.

When God finally brings judgment to the earth, how do you think he will feel about those who tried to enjoy the fellowship of God, but also enjoyed taking part in the works of the world which were unfruitful. There are many Christians today who think nothing of immersing themselves in the things of this world which bear no fruit toward God. They think nothing of taking part with the wicked in worldly enjoyments which do not produce any fruit of righteousness, and which only serve to stimulate the flesh side of man. But when we come to Christ, we go through a process of being born-again. This born-again experience causes us to reject the fleshly desires,

and to begin to have fellowship in spirit with God. Yet, the pull of this world is great. There is no end to the delights that this world offers. Satan has created a world social system that is almost more than man can imagine. He has created this world social system as a replacement for the spiritual relationship with God. In every way imaginable, Satan has caused the people of earth to build a marketplace which caters to worldly desires. Some of those desires are patently wicked, while some of those desires are very subtle. And most Christians are deceived much more than they think they are. For while most Christians can easily recognize the extremes of sinfulness, few can actually recognize the full extent of the deception. Therefore, Christians everywhere take part in the things of this world which bear no fruit of righteousness. In fact, the deception is so great that most Christians cannot comprehend how they can be an offense to God just by playing at things which are Satanic in nature. A simple example of this is the Harry Potter books and movies. Although the books and movies are fiction, the concepts are satanic, for the Bible clearly states that witchcraft is an abomination to God. There is absolutely no way that a person can play with things that are conceptually satanic, and still call it a fruitful work that brings glory to God. God does not enter into fellowship with Satan. If you are playing make-believe with witches, or watching TV or a movie that has people speaking God's name in vain, or taking off their clothes, then God is not in fellowship with you at this time. You are playing with things that are apposed to God. He is not going to join you in fellowship while you enjoy a game of witchcraft or watch people as they present themselves in sexually suggestive clothing or various stages of nakedness.

In short, the deception of most Christians is based on this one aspect of just playing at sin, and yet thinking that the particular sin has no hold on you because you aren't actually doing the sin in a physical way. Yet, if what you are doing does not give glory to God, is not part of God's plan for his people, is not scripturally based, and has no redeeming value for spiritual development, then it is of the world, and therefore it is hated by God. If, for instance, you're playing with Harry Potter stuff, then you are taking part in concepts which are apposed to the nature of God. And anytime you associate yourself with anything that is opposed to God and apposed to righteousness, God will in no way justify your actions. If you think you can play with things in this world which exemplify the flesh nature of man, you are greatly mistaken. No, you may not be doing the actual worldly things, or doing the actual satanic things, but when you watch and listen to these things on television or in the movies, or read about it in books and magazines, or act out the concepts of these things in a game of make-believe, you have just taken part with the nature of it. No, maybe you haven't actually participated in the actual evil work, but you have taken part in Satan's nature. Satan's way of entering you is through your eyes and ears. Many Christians think they are not affected by Satan, even though they allow him to present his world social system to them through their eyes and ears.

From the time of Adam and Eve until this current day, Satan has been creating a social system on earth which lacks the heavenly precepts, concepts, and righteousness of God. Satan has caused the world to pass from the pureness of God's creation, to a polluted form which is in opposition to everything that is of God, or is called God. If we consider the concept that we are supposed to be separate from unbelievers in the sense of what we partake of, then we have to take a close

look and see what God considers earthly, and what God considers heavenly. We know that James 1:8, says, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” If we, as Christians, are to be separate from the world, then we have to get our minds focused on just one thing instead of trying to focus on both God and the world. I don't think there is any Christian who doesn't believe that we should be separate from wickedness. But I think there are many Christians who don't comprehend what being separate really means. We do have to be in this world for awhile yet, but we don't have to be taking part in the same things that the wicked take part in.

Once again, let's take a look at Ephesians 5:11. It told us that we should not be in fellowship with anything which is a work of darkness, and is unfruitful. Being unfruitful means that it bears no fruit toward God. And a work of darkness is just simply anything which is of the nature of Satan and is opposed to the nature of God.

The nature of God is righteousness. It is goodness. Anything that the Holy Spirit of God moves you to do is good. Let's look at Galatians, chapter 5. I'll read verses 19 through 24. It says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifested, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, contentions, jealousy, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, 21 Envy, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and the like: of which I tell you beforehand, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

Notice that this scripture describes the nature of the flesh, and then describes the nature of God's Holy Spirit. It is the nature of God that God wants us to delight in, not the nature of the flesh. When we take delight in something, when we enter into the enjoyment of something, we are partaking in that thing. If it is a thing which falls into the category of the flesh nature, then we are taking part in the works of the flesh. The works of the flesh, because they are flesh and not spirit, are works of darkness. To fellowship in these things with the wicked people of the world is wrong in the eyes of God.

In verse 19, we just read a list of things which are works of the flesh. One of the things listed is witchcraft. Then in verse 21, we read that those who practice witchcraft will not inherit the kingdom of God. Yet many Christians seem to think that it is alright to play with the nature of witchcraft as long as we keep it in the realm of make-believe. But how can you separate yourself from evil while you are still playing with the nature of evil? As it says in Galatians 6:7, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.”

If you think you can play with the nature of evil, yet not be touched by the spirit of it, you are deceived. You cannot mock God and then just say, “Oh, I was only playing.” Do you honestly think God doesn't mind when you play games with his archenemy and pretend to be on the side of evil? Do you think God likes it when you enjoy watching or reading about the works of the flesh? In these verses of Galatians 5:19-24, we read that the nature of God's Holy Spirit is love,

joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. There is no way that God wants you to set these things aside so that you can enjoy the nature of evil for a few minutes.

For an example, let's pretend you are a parent with a little ten year old girl. You might think it is quite harmless for a little ten year old to play like she is a witch, but if you think that this is harmless, then why would you get uptight if she were to play make-believe with the other things listed in Galatians 5:19-21, such as, fornication, idolatry, murder, or drunkenness. What would you do if you found her playing make-believe at fornication. No, not the actual thing, just playing with the nature of it. Or, playing idol worship, and setting up one of her stuffed animals and bowing down and pretending to worship it? Or, playing make-believe and stabbing all her dolls to death? Or, playing make-believe that she was a drunk and was out bar hopping? I dare say you would not feel comfortable with these things, but then, why would you feel comfortable with her playing at witchcraft?

You know, it's no different with you and your children then it is with God. I'll tell you plain and simple. When you go around playing with works of the flesh, God is not pleased. He doesn't look the other way and say, "Oh, well, they're just kids. I hope they're having fun." If you think God just wants you to have fun, then you don't know the real God of heaven, but you have found some other god that isn't really a god at all. Satan loves it when you play his games. If he can't get you to do the actual evil works of the flesh, he'll try to get you to just enter into the nature of evil. That's why he has given us the Image of the Beast, so that we will be occupied with the nature of the world as much as possible. He knows that if you and your kids will sit in front of the TV long enough and watch enough movies, then he will have no problem moving you from make-believe into the actual participation of the works of darkness; especially your kids. He knows that he has a good chance of eventually getting you to play at the real thing. But then, he doesn't actually have to get you to do the real thing, because he knows that God will look on your heart and see what you really enjoy anyway. When God looks on your heart and sees that you get more enjoyment out of playing make-believe with the works of the flesh than you do with the righteous things of God, Satan knows right then that he has won, and that you belong to him and not to God. It isn't just who you confess to love that shows who you really love, but it's who you show love for that tells the actual truth.

Let me give you just one more example. Let's say you have someone you love very much, and will soon be married to them, or you're already married to them. Let's say this person you love very much likes to play make-believe, and to pretend they are with another person. And let's say that this other person is someone who you consider not to be a very nice person, and in fact, this other person hates you, and would love to see the relationship between you and your loved one destroyed. Some questions I'd like to ask you, are, "How long will you put up with your loved one's make-believe game? How will you react? Will you just smile and say, Oh, I hope this loved one of mine is having a wonderful time?"

Actually, I doubt there is a need for you to answer. Jealousy is a cruel master. Several scriptures in the Bible tell us that God is a jealous God. And Exodus 34:14 tells us that God's name is, Jealous. But let me read one specific verse about God's jealousy. It is found in Nahum, chapter 1, verse 2. It says, "God is jealous, and the LORD revenges; the LORD revenges, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserves wrath for his enemies." Let me ask you, do you want to incur the wrath of God by making him jealous by playing make-believe with his enemies? Do you want God to look the other way when you stand before him in judgment, and hear him say, "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity. I never knew you?"

God has called to the people of earth to come out from among the other wicked people and their lusts of the flesh and to become a separate people. As long as you are taking part in things which demonstrate the evil nature of Satan, you cannot consider yourself part of the people of God. The beast nature, the animal nature of Satan, is not something that God wants us to enjoy, but something that we are asked to come away from. But Christians hold back from making any real division between their relationship with God and their relationship with the world because they can't comprehend the extent of their offense to God by their participation with the things of this world. We were not called to shop until we drop, for if we love to do this, we are just demonstrating how much we love the things of this world. If you love to shop, you are making an action statement, and that action statement is telling everyone that you love the things that this world has for sale. But it is love for Satan's world system that will also seal your fate. You can't be in bed with the world and still consider yourself to be a virginal bride of Christ.

It is time, especially now that we are so near the soon coming of Christ, that we make the difficult decision to come out from among the world and actually become a separate people. It is time that we, as Christians, begin to be peculiar, just as God has called us to be. When God sent seventy of his disciples out to the different cities of Israel to foretell his coming and to do the miracles of God, he told them that they were being sent as lambs among wolves. This means that Jesus knew ahead of time that the wolves were going to tear up his lambs. But he still sent them. It's time for Christians to take their place as lambs among wolves, instead of trying to run with the pack. It's time to take our place as those who are rejected, as those who are slandered for the word of God, and as those who are ready to suffer the reproach of Christ. But the reproach will not last forever. Soon, Jesus will come for us in the clouds of heaven. When we rise to meet him in the air, it won't matter anymore how many times we have been rejected and been made fun of. When Jesus comes, it will have all been worth it. No, it isn't fun to be the odd-ball, the geek; the peculiar person. But then, what if Jesus was to come back today and find you still playing games with his archenemy? In short, it's time for Christians to practice real Christianity, not Satan's game of make-believe.