

The Four Compromises of the Devil

By Doug Hamilton

The account of Moses and his encounter with Pharaoh makes for some interesting reading. It was during the series of plagues that we find another series of value that is often overlooked. It is a sequence of four compromises that the devil would like for the church and the Christians therewith to take. It is the purpose of this series of lessons to examine the four compromises offered by Pharaoh and apply them to our own lives and strategy to assure our goal of salvation.

- 1) Plague of Nile to Blood –Hardening of Pharaoh’s heart
- 2) Plague of Frogs –Hardening of Pharaoh’s heart
- 3) Plague of Gnats –Hardening of Pharaoh’s heart
- 4) Plague of Flies –Hardening of Pharaoh’s heart

Compromise #1: Serve God with Uncommitted Worship

- Ex 8:25-27 Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.”²⁶ But Moses said, “It is not right to do so, for we will sacrifice to the LORD our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what is an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not then stone us?”²⁷ “We must go a three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He commands us.”
- God was calling for the Israelites to leave the land of Egypt, go into the wilderness and make sacrifice to Him. When this idea was proposed to Pharaoh, it was not warmly received. Pharaoh’s reply was the first of four compromises. He proposed that the Jews could stay and make the sacrifices unto their God. This is called the Compromise of Uncommitted Worship because they were to not leave pagan Egypt’s realm of influence. In fact the implication was that Egypt would be overseeing the worship even under the threat of punishment if it did not line up with their system. The Egyptians had their many different sacrifices to their many different gods and unless Egyptian protocol would be followed, there would be trouble.
- The command was quite clear from the beginning of Moses’ commission from God, Exodus 3:18 “...go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.” The command outlined the WHERE, the WHO, the WHAT and the WHY. The first compromise called for the Israelites to violate the WHERE of the specified commands. They were being asked to compromise their sacrificial worship unto God.
- This is one of the compromises that the devil would like us to make, to serve God with Uncommitted Worship. When God called up out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9), He expected us to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). He designed our corporate worship to follow a pattern that is void of the worldly influence of denominationalism. It is in the simple nature of the corporate worship of God that is in constant threat from the outside.
- There were many problems in the first-century Corinthian congregation. There was jealousy, sexual promiscuity, greed and pride just to name a few. One of the areas that stood out the most was when they were assembling for worship on the first day of the week. This was primarily dealt with from chapters 11-15 as identified with the following terms (one another -11:33, 12:25, 16:20 / come together -11:17, 18, 11:33, 34 / meet together -11:20 / assembles together -14:23 / assembled 14:23, 26). Right in the middle of

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this section, Paul made a memorable statement, *1 Corinthians 14:40* *But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.* This was because they were not carrying out worship properly and in order, but in utter chaos. During their assembly, they were...

- ...allowing the women to lead the men (11:4-16, 14:34-36).
 - ...taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy fashion (11:23-34).
 - ...abusing and misusing the miraculous gifts (chapter 12).
 - ...not showing genuine love for one another (chapter 13).
 - ...vying for superiority in speaking (chapter 14).
 - ...not keeping the message Christ-centered (chapter 15).
- With all the problems that Paul was trying to address in their worship chaos, there is an interesting corporate pattern of worship that is carried through to the modern day.
 - They took of the Lord's Supper TOGETHER! (11:23-34)
 - They sang spiritual songs TOGETHER! (14:15)
 - They prayed TOGETHER! (14:15)
 - They were edified and instructed in the word of God TOGETHER! (14:19)
 - They collected an offering of funds TOGETHER! (16:1-4)

From this we find the most basic pattern that all members of the church of Christ could participate in. Paul stated in *1 Corinthians 4:17* "*For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.*" It is in the simple pattern of worship at every church of Christ in the New Testament that we see this to be evident.

A. Song

Our singing prepares the group of Christians to be filled with the Spirit for worship.

- Ephesians 5:18-19 "...be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord..."
 - When we are plucking the heart strings with songs of praise, we are being filled with the Spirit.

Our singing allows God's word to richly dwell in our hearts.

- Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
 - When we sing songs of praise together on the first day of the week, the songs allow the words of Christ to dwell deep within our hearts. Many of the songs that we sing are actually word for word out of the Bible.
 - Matthew 6:33 (KJV) "...seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
 - 2 Timothy 1:12 (KJV) "...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.
 - Psalm 25:1-4 (KJV) Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.² O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.³ Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.⁴ Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

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- Psalm 18:46 (KJV) The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.
- There are literally thousands of songs in many multiple languages throughout the world that have been burned into the hearts and minds of millions of Christians. It was all possible because of spiritual songs repeatedly echoing off the lips of those that love God.

Our singing allows joins us to Jesus in praise.

- Hebrews 2:11-12 (NCV) Jesus, who makes people holy, and those who are made holy are from the same family. So he is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters. ¹² He says, “Then, I will tell my brothers and sisters about you; I will praise you in the public meeting.”
 - The Hebrews writer was quoting Psalms 22:22 in future tense description of what Christ does for us and with us in the church.

Our singing uniquely joins us together as one in Christ.

- Revelation 14:1-2 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard *was* like *the sound* of harpists playing on their harps.
 - In this passage we find all the people of God in perfect unison under the authority of Christ. They are singing bold and crisp as thunder, as harmonious as running water and as beautiful as the harp. THEY ARE ONE IN PURPOSE, IN MIND and IN HEART.

B. Prayer

The early church relied heavily on prayer.

- Acts 6:4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”
- Acts 1:14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
- Acts 2:42-45 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
- Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.
- Colossians 4:2 “Devote yourselves to prayer...”

It was one of the ways the church bonded together.

- Romans 15:30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,
- James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

It was the church’s secret weapon against the works of the devil.

- Ephesians 6:18-19 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹ and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

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- Philippians 1:19 "...for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ..."
- They can take away our Bibles, take away our building, take away our families, but they can never take away our communication line to God!

It was through prayer that the church confirmed their leaders.

- Acts 13:3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
- Acts 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Our congregational prayers are not an inconvenience, but a powerful, united front against the devil. We as a group should have great joy knowing that our prayers are ascending as one unto the Father. *Revelation 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.*

C. Collection

Jesus tied our faith to God to our attachment to earthly possessions.

- Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."²⁰ "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The early church understood this to be the pattern.

- 1 Cor 16:1-2 "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,² that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.³ For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord,⁴ begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,⁵ and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.
- 2 Cor 9:7 "Let each one {do} just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver."

It is a demonstration of our faith.

- Mark 12:41-44 And He sat down opposite the treasury, and {began} observing how the multitude were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.⁴² And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.⁴³ And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;⁴⁴ for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

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It provides a “buy in” for the furtherance of the kingdom.

- Luke 16:9 “I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”
- 1 Tim 5:18 “For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”?
- Philippians 4:14-16 Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.¹⁵ You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;¹⁶ for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.

D. Lord’s Supper

- 1 Cor 11:23-29 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same way {He took} the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink {it,} in remembrance of Me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly.
 - “remembrance” –It is a Commemoration for EACH OTHER of what Christ did for us.
 - “proclaim” –It is a Proclamation to EACH OTHER of what Christ did for us.
 - “until He comes” –It is an Anticipation with EACH OTHER that He is coming back!
 - “examine” –It is an personal Examination of EACH OTHER that we are living for Christ!

E. Preaching

What is the nature of the instruction for the assembly?

A) It is to be preached accurately.

- 1 Tim 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.
- Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

B) It is to be preached encouragingly.

- Col 4:8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know {about} our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;
- 1Thes 3:2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,
- 1Thes 5:11-12 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

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- Acts 14:21-22 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and {saying,} "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

C) It is to be preached boldly.

- Acts 9:27-28 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord.
- Acts 18:25-26 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

D) It is to be preached numerically.

- 2 Tim 2:2 And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.
- Acts 8:4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

E) It is to be preached "Christocentricly".

- 1 Tim 4:10-11 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. These things command and teach.
- Acts 13:32-34 "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this {promise} to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.' "{And as for the fact} that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy {and} sure {blessings} of David.'
- 1 Cor 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,
- 1 Cor 2:2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Conclusion of first compromise:

The worship services in the churches of Christ are patterned with simplicity in mind. Everyone in attendance can sing, can pray, can give, can partake of the Lord's Supper and can learn. It is when we break the pattern with compromise that trouble and division arises.

Never seek compromise when it comes to worship.