



Ministry of the Word

Sunday 11th May 2017

by Vincent Gannon

Scripture: Daniel 1 : 1 - 10

Subject: Chapter 1, Part 3 – Compromise

In these verses that we have just read, Daniel has entered into Babylon. He and his friends are being introduced into a training programme that the King himself requires them to go through. The program however required Daniel and friends to make a “small compromise” which to us may appear at first sight, very inviting. No prison food for them like so many others, they were invited to eat from the kings table. This was first class stuff and well prepared, but Daniel and his friends knew that this would be the beginning of the end for them. Note if you will the eunuch’s response to the refusal. It would not only be death for them but for him also. “Look if you don’t partake it’s my life?” quite a plead don’t you think! Obviously this was a situation he (the eunuch either had seen or heard of before). Their position was in reality which king would they obey. Having read this book, we now know that the choice Daniel made was indeed the best.

We have God’s manual and we are faced like Daniel and his friends with the same choice’s perhaps, in a different way. Which king will we give our allegiances to? To a king among kings or to the King of kings. The word that jumps out at me from these verses is the word COMPROMISE.



PERSONAL COMPROMISE

We live in a day of compromise. In fact, I believe that from the time we begin our life in the world, we pretty well learn the art of compromise. All the way along our life, we tend to go in the line of least resistance. We hold a conviction until it gets in the way of our comfort or our ease. We have a standard as long as it doesn't violate something we wish to do. If we can get by with a little less than our best, we'll do it. In many cases, if we can cheat a little on the divine principles, or even the principles we say we believe, we'll do that too if it accomplishes our goals. We as believers have God given principles and standards which have been laid out in His word to live by. When we set these standards to one side, or pick and choose which ones we want to follow then we have entered into a whole world of compromise.

Frankly, expedience is the ruling standard of human life today. Society worships the great god "pragmatism". I suppose our motto today could be, "If it works for you, do it!" We are pragmatists more than anything else. And in our day the majority have abandoned any moral standard, they have cut themselves completely loose from Christian principle. We no longer are concerned for a biblical morality (not that we necessarily had one to start with). We are left with only the philosophy of expedience, or pragmatism. Whatever works, whatever accomplishes your goal, whatever gains your end, that's what you do and so we easily give up our consciences. We easily give up our convictions. We easily let go of our standards to gain some practical end. The amazing part of it is that our society seems to have little conscience left, little sense of guilt or remorse at all. Really, do we want to buy into that?

We find out that, politicians, who seem to have such high standards, who at the time when they are to be elected, hail from one end of the country these great standards, but when they find themselves in office, are eager to compromise those standards if it gains their ends. We find the same thing true in business practices, as corporate executives all the way down to people who are salespeople do the same thing. The legal profession, who should be the conscience of any society, will compromise their own consciences if it gains a certain end in many cases. Leaders in all walks of life will do the same thing very often. As individuals of all shapes and sizes, we learn to lie, and we learn to cheat, we learn to steal, we learn to shade the truth, and we learn to do whatever is necessary to get what we want, so that compromise becomes a way of life.



When we get into a challenging situation, sometimes our greatest principles are shoved into the background because we don't want to offend somebody, or we don't want to be blatant, or we're afraid to really speak out about what we believe. Perhaps in the life of a Christian it's nowhere more obvious than when you stand in the midst of conversation where you know you should speak of Christ, but rather than be thought evil, or be thought less of, you keep your mouth closed and you are silent about Christ when He should be brought up. That in itself is a compromise. For the sake of our own ego and our goals, we readily compromise. It does not have to be all the time but sure enough as soon as we start down that road compromise becomes easier one step at a time.

THE CHURCH COMPROMISED

Compromising standards and compromising truths has found its way into the global church also. In fact, it has compromised with the world so repeatedly, that frankly folks, I think we don't even understand what the compromises are anymore. Whenever the world comes up with something, it seems that many churches invariably follow. If the world wants to have a kind of a hippie movement, we'll find a church that will have a Jesus-hippie movement. If the world wants to have a rock-music movement, just give enough of time and we'll hear of a church somewhere having it too. If the world decides to have a women's lib movement, just wait and they'll have one.

The church globally has so long compromised with the world, and has become so engulfed in its materialistic viewpoint, in its economics, and its style of life that there is little possibility that we can even understand what an uncompromising life really means. We fight to be separated from the world, and yet in so many church they are unable to define what that separation means because they've been so brainwashed by the system.

So many have accepted the world's thought patterns and accepted the world's value systems, followed by accepting the world's attitudes and implying its economics, meaning their focus being about money and the increase of it! Many church indulge themselves and their congregations. Many church are also accepting the world's morality. Even though we know the Bible teaches opposing view of the world, many don't care for its teaching really and if



they want to do something, then they will just go ahead and do it anyway claiming God will understand or sure it's a different generation and culture. They will always find an excuse to do what they want.

Compromise, is an unwillingness to live accordingly as God intended us. And so we, personally as well as the church often substitute ourselves as the ones to be pleased rather than God, and we learn the art of compromise very well.

GOD'S STANDARD

Scripture calls upon us to do just the very opposite. We should spend time from a Theological perspective. We can see this principle intertwined throughout the whole Bible. In the Old Testament as God calls his people to be separate from the world.

“But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.” Psalm 4:3

We also see it clearly throughout the gospels, Jesus clearly taught it himself as well as in the epistles. Right throughout the bible God calls His people to live apart from the world,

“Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.” James 1:21

When God designed the nation Israel, He built standards for their very daily living, the way they dressed, the way they ate, the way they conducted themselves in a daily routine, and even the calendar for the year. He built in safeguards to prevent them from intermingling with pagans. He's done the same for all of His people. We have a standard that really can't be compatible with the world. “But we are under grace not law?” Of course we are but has God's standards changed? Is how we dress of no importance? How we speak? How we conduct ourselves before others? How we do business? Does it make a difference if we are honest or not? There is more to freedom than been selfish and self-centred, and doing your own thing. Where does God come into the picture? If at all.



And yet, how easily do we compromise. How easily do we abandon our absolutes? How easily do we allow our character qualities to become faulty as we seek to please ourselves under the pressure of the system in which we live?

It might be well to remind ourselves at the very beginning that God is the uncompromising God. God never compromises an absolute. God never compromises a principle. God never sets aside a truth for expediency purposes. God always lives according to His word. In fact, He said,

“I have exalted My word above all My name.” Psalm 138:2

In other words, He says, “I Myself, as to My nature, make Myself submissive to My word.”

The Word is the basis of the integrity for the life of a believer. God, the Holy One has exalted His Word above all and brings Himself into commitment to that very Word, and as His children, we are to do the same.

I want to just share with you one passage from 2 Corinthians chapter 6, and then another one from Hebrews, to give you an insight. In 2 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 17, I think you have a summary of New Testament teaching relative to this kind of separation. It says,

“Wherefore come out from among them,”

“Them” referring to idolatrous people, people connected with Satan, infidels, unrighteous, people in darkness, the unregenerate world, -

“come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and do not touch the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

That separation, or as this verse talks about coming out, is coming out from the madness and meaningless of the world's system. We are in the world but not of it says John in John 17.

Now listen, God is the separated, uncompromising One, and He directs His people, to truly manifest that they are His people. To do this they must also be the separated, uncompromising people. When we compromise with the world, it has devastating effects in two areas.

First of all, it affects our worship, Hebrews chapter 13. When we compromise and accept the standard of the world and set God's standards aside, it destroys our worship.

Hebrews 13, verse 12, a tremendous passage.

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate."

- that is, to separate them from sin – "suffered outside the gate."

You remember in the sacrificial system of Israel, when it was time to slay the lamb for the sins of the people, those sins were symbolically placed upon another animal and that other animal was taken outside the city, outside the gates, separated from the people. Jesus is simply drawing on the simple idea of separation. When He died, He died separated from the city, outside the walls, outside the concourse of human society. He died separated "In order that He might purchase a separated people." That's the whole point.

Then in verse 13 of the same chapter, it says, if Christ separated Himself to purchase a separated people,

"let us then go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp, and bear His reproach."

In other words, let's then live separated lives. If He died separated to purchase a separated people, then let us live a separated life.

"For we have no continuing city here, but we seek one to come." And when we've done that, "by Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." Hebrews 13:14

In other words, you can't even worship unless you are living a separated life from the world. We are called to be separated. Remember the term John 3:3 *"born again"* not born the same.

John put it this way:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15



James (4:4) puts it this way:

“Don’t you know that friendship with the world is enmity against God?”

You cannot be the friend of the world and the friend of God. We are called to a separated life. And if we are not separated, it destroys our worship.

Secondly, it destroys our service. We can’t serve the Lord. We become useless. In 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 20, it says,

“In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but of wood and earth; some to honour, and some to dishonour.”

That’s probably true in your house, is it? You’ve got the old stuff, you know, the stuff with the chips, and the plastic stuff, and all the mix and match stuff that everybody in your family gets? Then when somebody important comes over, you pull out the good stuff, and all the kids say, you know, “How come we never get that?” That’s typical. We all have that. We all have, you know, the everyday utensils that we eat with, and then we have the very fine silver that is only for special occasions.

Well, so it is with God. In God’s treasure house of utensils – skeuos, it’s a word meaning any kind of utensil - there are things unto honour and some unto dishonour. Now, if you want to be a utensil that God can use, then purge yourself from false teachers, false teaching, and the false kind of living. Separate yourself from ungodliness. Flee youthful lusts. Avoid the foolish and argumentations that breed strife. In other words, separate yourself from false teaching and false standards and false ways of living, or you cannot be a vessel fit for the Master’s use.

I am reminded of a true story about a yacht that was anchored one time on the Niagara River. When all of a sudden, because the water was rushing rather rapidly, and the wind was blowing, and there was a small kind of a little upheaval on the river, the rope holding the boat to the dock broke, and it began to drift in the current, and it happened that there were people on board the small yacht. They became panic stricken as it went rapidly towards Niagara Falls. Some of them were accusing each other, screaming at each other about who was to blame, and why did you get me on this boat, and on and on it went. They could hear the thundering sound of the falls immediately ahead of them. What were they to do? Well there was a



military man on board, a man of action. According to the story he had a piece of dynamite in his kit. He simply embedded it in the hull and lit it and blew a huge hole in the middle of the boat which proceeded immediately to sink the boat. Once the boat was sunk and no longer moving, the people were readily rescued as they clung to it in rather shallow water.

I suppose that's what has to happen in our lives too. Somewhere along the line, as believers, we have to scuttle the ship of compromise. We have to sink the vessel of worldliness or we're going to find ourselves rapidly moving toward a disaster.

That's what God calls us to. That's the standard by which we are to live and none other than the Lord Jesus Christ is our pattern. In chapter 7 of Hebrews, verse 26, it says,

“He was a high priest who was fitting” - Listen – “because He was holy, He was harmless, He was undefiled” - Now listen to this – “He was separated from sinners.”

He is the pattern: holy, harmless, undefiled; separated from sinners. God calls us to such a life. God calls us to such a commitment.

Moses, you know, made that commitment to a separated life. In Hebrews 11:26, it says of Moses:

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing One who was invisible.”

Moses chose God over Pharaoh. He chose heaven over earth. He chose the will of God rather than the treasure of Egypt.

Ruth (in Ruth chapter 1) made a commitment like that.

“And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.”

Ruth clinging is told,



“Go back to your former life; go back to the pagan gods.”

And Ruth said,

“Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. And when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.”

Ruth said, “I will not return to a former life. I am committed to God and since you represent Him, I am committed to you.”

David made the same commitment. In Psalm 119, David said,

“I have sworn, and I will perform it, I will keep Thy righteous judgments.”

In verse 115, he said, *“Depart from me, ye evil doers:”* - get away – *“for I will keep the commandments of my God.”*

Moses wouldn't compromise, Ruth wouldn't compromise, and neither would David. Barnabas, that lovely man of God who we see in the New Testament, so instrumental in the life of the early church, in Acts 11:23 says of him,

“When he came, and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”

Barnabas told the early church to be uncompromising and to cleave to the Lord.

This is not just something to think about, as wonderful as that is. It is also something to do. We may not readily admit to compromise in our lives but when we stop and consider our ways, our thoughts, our actions, I'm sure we can find room for improvement. We either live what we believe or else believe what we live. We can't have it both ways for to do that is comprise.

Amēn.