**It's Not Everybody's Fault**

(Romans 16:17-20 KJV)

*17Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.18For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. 19For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.20And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

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e would all agree that the primary responsibility of parents is to love their children unconditionally, supporting them constantly, and encourage them to live God fearing lives—but we all recognize that there are times when parents must warn their children of danger. Beware! If a stranger asks you to get into his or her car, you must never enter therein. If he or she offers you candy or if he says he knows your mother or your father still you must never get into his or her car. It is dangerous because there are a few extremely wicked people in the world. You must inform the stranger that your parents never allowed you to get in a car with someone you don’t know.

So it is with the message to the Roman church. It is the message of the Lord Jesus Christ and it speaks of grace abounding to the chief of sinners, full of the kindness and love of our great God and Saviour, but there are also times when notes of warning are sounded and our text is one of those.

Paul in the text before us is warning the believers in the church that trouble sooner or later will arrive at the church house where we come to worship with peace and harmony. This is an important message because every church has difficulty, dilemma and sudden danger sooner or later. In fact, some churches sometimes have difficulty getting enough members together to make up a quorum for a business meeting. But there’s one easy way to get far more than a quorum:

Now you check it out sometimes—that if you boldly announce an ungodly moral scandal, a doctrinal controversy between two preachers or some disgruntle member keeping up mess and encouraging church members to split the church. The sanctuary will be jammed with people. In other words Church Conflict will always draws a crowd—some will be spectators and they'll bring popcorn to pass around, some suspicious and that's the undercover troublemaker, and some will stay secluded listening but not in the meeting.

It's ironic that every church has problems, some large, some small, and every church will face a time of crisis, catastrophe, and calamity sooner or later. In fact, neither of us will be able to avoid it completely, and you can’t always head it off at the press or manage your way to get around it. And it doesn’t matter whether your church is young or old or what denomination it is or who the pastor is or what sort of church government you have. We must all agree that none of that cancels basic human nature—and the reality that sometimes unholy people end up inside the church. It's Not Everybody's Fault—that the church is in that predicament

This is exactly the same situation Paul confronts as he nears the end of his letter to the church at Rome. After having given such warm greetings, he issues a final, solemn warning. After all, Paul had seen a lot in his ministry. He had seen churches start well and then decline. He had seen churches split into arguing factions and lose their effectiveness for Christ. And in some sad cases he had seen good churches become infected with heresy that ultimately turned them away from Christ altogether. So could that happen to your church? The answer is yes!