

THE GOSPEL ENTRUSTED TO US

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

INTRODUCTION

As we embark on our study today of this first letter to Timothy we ought to always remind ourselves what it means to study the Word of God. The privilege it truly is. The blessing of expository teaching. Studying the word verse by verse, book by book.

Last week as some of you might now, Pastor Pano and myself, along with two other pastor friends of ours went to our annual pastor's conference in California. On Sunday we were staying at a hotel that by God's grace was one block away from a beautiful looking church in the town of San Clemente. I mean it had ocean view and everything. I was so excited to visit this church as I love going to new churches when I travel.

Even though the preacher had picked a text to preach from and he wasn't going to just make something up out of thin air; to my unfortunate disappointment, I left with nothing from the sermon. Afterwards I couldn't help but think to myself, if this congregation could only experience what true preaching looks like. Their lives would be transformed and their walk with the Lord would be profoundly blessed beyond measure.

You see the expository preaching of the Word of God is known as one of the means of grace that God has left us to know Him better and in turn to love Him greater. But I believe there is something that we fail to understand of the importance of studying the Scriptures well; and that is the very fact that this message isn't only for us to hear, but also for us to preach.

Starting our study of 1 Timothy will prove to us how important this actually is. You see Paul is addressing from the very beginning of his letter the importance of sound doctrine to battle against false teachings. But as we read in the last verse we will be studying today: v. 11 - "in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted."

Paul had been entrusted with this Gospel message. And when any of us repent and believe in this beautiful message, we in turn are given the privilege to carry this treasure in jars of clay. You see the Gospel isn't something we believed in once in our life and go on with what we were doing. We come back to this truth everyday as the transforming power of God in our lives. And that is why I have entitled our study for today: "The Gospel Entrusted to Us"

You can't read this letter as a spectator thinking of how great it must have been for Timothy to get such encouraging letters from Paul in his ministry. NO! We all have a ministry in our lives and according to the Scriptures it's the ministry of reconciliation. Calling a lost world to repent and reconcile with our Father through our Savior. And we are all called to take care of the precious treasure we sold everything for to buy the plot of land in which it was buried in. So let us dive into our study today knowing that we too have been entrusted with this beautiful Gospel.

BIBLE PASSAGE

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, **2** To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. **3** As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, **4** nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. **5 The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** **6** Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, **7** desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. **8** Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, **9** understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, **10** the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and

whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, **11** in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

FALSE DOCTRINES

***1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, **2** To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. **3** As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, **4** nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.*

Now we know this is a pastoral letter, in other words, a letter written to pastor Timothy who was overseeing the church at Ephesus at the time. And if we want to know more about this church we have so much to gather from starting of course with the book of Ephesians. But I would like to start with the origin story of the church in the book of Acts.

Acts 19:1,8-10

1 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. **8** And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. **9** But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. **10** This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

I believe that what Paul had started at the church of Ephesus was what we could consider a modern day seminary. “(he) took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus” So from the get go he was training this church to know the truths of Scripture profoundly well.

We can see that when we go to the actual book of the Ephesians. And what we can gather from a study of this book is how theologically rich it is. I mean the fact that Paul decides to drop the “simple” concept of predestination from the very first

chapter shows you that this church knew a thing or two when it came to the more complex doctrines of our faith.

So as we paint a picture of this church we understand the importance it was for Paul to keep this church growing in their spiritual maturity through the sound teaching of the Gospel.

Yet we have the main audience of this letter as the young pastor known as Timothy. But who was Timothy? Well we know he was a young believer from Lystra who traveled with Paul during his second and third missionary journeys. We also know that his mother and grandmother were faithful in their discipleship of Timothy. We know that essentially he grew up in the faith and studying the Scriptures. But more importantly we know that he was entrusted with the call to correct and properly pastor this church at Ephesus.

As Abner helped us to see last week, we know that the central purpose of this letter is found in **1 Timothy 3:15** - *I write so that you will know how one should act in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*

What Timothy was tasked with was how we ought to live in the household of God and how we are called to uphold the truths of the Gospel. So ultimately the two major themes we will see throughout this letter are related to congregational life and the defense against false teachings.

That leads us to our text for today. We can see that there were *certain persons (teaching) different doctrines, 4 (devoting) themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations...*

The errors that Paul left Timothy to correct in Ephesus appear to have been primarily Jewish in nature, involving unrestrained speculation about genealogies and allegorical interpretations of the Law like those found in rabbinical literature. In case you don't know that is how even modern day Rabbis interpret the Scriptures. Through allegory. Which isn't far from some of the hermeneutical gymnastics I've seen preachers apply to certain texts of the Bible.

The point is this, none of this meaningless gibberish had anything to do with the proper stewardship of the household of God. Disputes do not promote “house order” in the church. **The focus of a believer’s life should be the clear and sound doctrine found in the Word of God and not human speculation.**

There is so much out there to speculate when it comes to the Scriptures. And I believe the text isn’t explicitly prohibiting your freedom to speculate but what it is saying is to keep it to yourself. Don’t bring it to the church. Don’t share it with young believers. Don’t confuse people from the central truths of the Gospel with which you have been entrusted.

We haven’t been called to speculate. We have been called to learn and study the well established truths that have been passed down from Jesus through the Apostles for the foundation of His church. We study these truths to the extent that we are capable of teaching them to a child or to a mature believer. Because speculating won’t help anyone when it comes to Satan’s war on truth in the church. We are called to become mature disciples, according to Ephesians 4 by the way, and raise mature disciples capable of perceiving a counterfeit gospel when it comes our way.

And while we don’t know the exact nature of these false teachings in Ephesus we can apply this to our modern context to guard against false doctrine. And these are four of the main false doctrines circulating in the church today. I’ve summarized these doctrines from the book by Tim Challies on False Teachings:

1. The Prosperity Gospel - It teaches that individuals who exercise true faith in Christ will most surely attain physical, material, and financial prosperity in this life. That you give to get and all you have to do is name it and claim it.
2. Deism - It’s the belief that guarantees salvation to those who pursue a life of goodness and kindness. Deism teaches that all people can know and believe in a Supreme Being that helps them be a “good” person.
3. Antinomianism - Antinomianism says that God does not require a believer to obey the moral law of the Scriptures. In its more extreme and perverted form, it permits immoral behavior based on the leniency of grace. Once saved always saved. Hyper-grace.

4. Legalism - Legalism is the insistence that a person is accepted by God on the basis of his law keeping. It teaches that we are declared righteous before God through our own observance of either God's law or man-made rules and regulations.

This is not an exhaustive list of current day false teachings but we can gather from these four how to spot what deviates from the truth. But we know that whatever falsehood we are called to rebuke we should do it from a place of love. A love for God and a love for others. You see at some moment the Ephesians had overcorrected in being so zealous for truth they have forgotten their first love.

Revelation 2:2-4

2 “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. **3** I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. **4** But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

That is why Paul's writing to Timothy aimed at this one truth when it came to addressing false teachings...

THE PURPOSE OF OUR EXHORTATION

5 *The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* **6** *Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion,* **7** *desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*

You can see that Paul is painting a picture of ignorant know-it-alls. This is the worst type of false teacher. Whenever I hear someone preach without understanding and on top of that condemn those who don't agree with them, that is when my Christlikeness is really put to the test. The first thing you want to do, in the flesh of course, is to bash them over the head with sound doctrine. You want to correct them out of spite and even make them feel like an idiot in winning a theological argument with them. Yet the very thing some of you might feel when wanting to correct this type of person is the very thing Paul is writing Timothy not to do.

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

We are called to lovingly correct false doctrine. If your desire is to see a person repent of their crooked teaching you do with with gentleness and meekness. I'm sure we all have gone through seasons of deceitful teaching. I know I have. So instead of making me feel like the biggest chump for having believed in something that doesn't line up with the Scriptures, the people around me patiently took me through texts that opened my eyes to these truths.

You see Paul states that these people wandered away from this loving aim into vain discussions "without understanding". In other words, in ignorance. 99% of the time when we hear someone preaching false doctrine it comes from ignorance. That is not in anyway to excuse the false teaching but it should help us to confront it showing grace. Satan works through these false teachings by using a little bit of truth. So we can build our argument on those truths and lead these people to a complete picture of the Gospel. Especially when it comes to those who we know have a knowledge of Jesus but not as complete maybe as some of us do. Interestingly enough, this actually happened at Ephesus with Apollos.

Acts 18:24-26

24 At that time a Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was an educated man from Alexandria. He knew the Scriptures very well. **25** Apollos had been taught the way of the Lord. He spoke with great power. He taught the truth about Jesus. But he only knew about John's baptism. **26** He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Priscilla and Aquila heard him. So they invited him to their home. There they gave him a better understanding of the way of God.

We go on to read...

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

8 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, **9** understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, **10** the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers,

These so called teachers of the Law might have been deceiving the church at Ephesus with legalism. Instruction without love promotes legalism. And Paul's argument here is that the law is good when it's used lawfully to bring unrepentant sinners to faith in Christ. *the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners...*

That is why when we share the Gospel we must start with the Law. An exercise on this can be done with the "Good Person Test" using the Ten Commandments.

So the purpose of the Law is to bring about salvation through the recognition of our sin; the very thing that Paul recognizes later on in this chapter: "Christ showed his patience with me, the worst of all sinners."

SOUND DOCTRINE

*and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, **11** in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.*

So this leads us to the main theme of our study today. This is in the immediate context of the Law. This glorious Gospel has freed us from the bondage of sin and the condemnation of the Law. Having established this truth, that we are all sinners saved by grace we come to the realization that this very truth is the Gospel, in other words the Good News of salvation. We did not deserve salvation yet God granted us a Savior through His Son. In knowing how deep our sin is we come to embrace this glorious Gospel. Not only for ourselves and what it has done for us but also to break the bondage of sin in the lives of others.

We are to call out anything and everything that is contrary to sound doctrine. The word for "sound" here is derived from the Greek for "in good health", so our teaching should be healthy bringing about the spiritual well being of our souls. Just as healthy food fuels our body to function in its optimal state, healthy doctrine fuels our mind and our hearts to live our Christian walk with greater strength and endurance.

It protects us from the lies of the devil. It takes away our anxieties. It gives wisdom to work better, to make better decisions, to love our spouse better, to serve our children better, to manage our finances properly, to pray more fervently and to

know God more deeply through our growing knowledge of Christ through His word.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude our study with this. We can understand that this Gospel message has been entrusted to us just as much as it was to Paul and of course to Timothy. We are called to grow in the knowledge of the Gospel and all that it entails. And as we grow we become more aware of the counterfeit gospels out there that can lead others astray.

But as we read in our study today, all of this should come from a place of: **love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** You see our pure heart for the Gospel can only come from a place of love because it is the greatest display of love we could ever encounter. Yet the Gospel transformation in our lives brings about a good conscience for our thoughts are now consumed by that which pleases God. The Law that once condemned us is now what we most love just like David sings in the Psalms. And our faith is sincere because we recognize that it is only through faith alone in Christ alone that we can even be saved.

We have been given the greatest treasure of all, let us guard it with our lives and live to promote the King of Kings who has given it to us as stewards of the light of His glorious Gospel. Amen.