

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 30TH, 2019 // 1 TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 1 instructs us on the importance of having a proper understanding of the gospel, Christ's commitment to saving sinners, and the spiritual battle that's all around us.

THE LAW (1 TIM. 1:6-11)

The reason Timothy is serving as pastor in Ephesus is to "charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine...[of] myths & endless genealogies" (vs. 3-4).

- Because of these false teachers, certain persons within the church had "wandered away" (vs. 6) and had become misled.
- This false teaching was "vain discussion"- it was fruitless, empty, and just flat out untrue.

The people that had wandered into this false teaching did so because they desired to be "teachers of the law" (vs. 7).

- It seems that the driving force behind this group was to attract admiration and respect, and to gain the title "teacher of the law".
- Anyone that is motivated to lead or teach in the church solely by their own selfish ambition disqualifies themselves from leading (James 3:16).

No matter how badly these people desired a following or want to be considered as experts or leaders, they had no clue what they were talking about (vs. 7).

- Their ideas and intricate systems of thinking were groundless and not based in scripture, even in spite of their "confident assertions".
- Sincerity does not automatically translate into truth- someone can be sincere, but sincerely wrong.

Paul then clarifies the purpose of the law- "the law is good if one uses it lawfully" (vs. 8).

- Of course God's law is good, but like anything good, it can be misused.
- The misuse in Ephesus seems to be that people were beginning to think that there were additional rules beyond God's law (4:3,7,8) and by following them one could be saved.
- This is serious deception, but it's alive and well today!

When Paul refers to "the law" that he's referring not just to the first 5 books of the Bible, but more specifically the 10 commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) based on the examples he provides.

- There are many functions of the law given in the NT for believers.
- Paul seems to be highlighting one purpose in particular- the law exists to show the boundaries of good and evil so we can avoid sin.

THE PURPOSES OF THE LAW

- To show us that God is holy and what He means for us when He tells us to be holy (1 Pet. 1:16). To serve as a guide for right and wrong in our daily choices (Rom. 7:12).
- To reveal sin (Rom. 3:20).
- To point to our inability to follow the law, our condemnation for not following it, and our need for a Savior (Rom. 3:19-20).

When Paul states that the "law is not laid down for the just, but for the lawless and disobedient"- he's pointing to the purpose of the law for revealing sin in the lives of unbelievers.

- How else would someone know that they were "lawless and disobedient" if there was no law or standard that had to be obeyed?
- The catalogue of sin covers big sins and small sins- we're all guilty under the law.

But then Paul talks about the "gospel of glory" that he's been entrusted with.

- The gospel, or "good news", is that sinless, perfect Jesus died a death reserved for lawbreakers and rebels, experiencing the condemnation of the law on our behalf.
- Because of this, God offers forgiveness if we admit our inadequacy to live by His righteous standards, repent, and trust in Christ alone.

CHRIST JESUS CAME TO SAVE SINNERS (1 TIM. 1:12-17)

In contrast to the false teachers in Ephesus who were teaching a distortion of the gospel, Paul offers his personal testimony as an example of how the true gospel had worked in his life.

- Paul's testimony is centered on Christ and His work- any good work Paul had accomplished had been because Christ had given him strength and God had appointed him to service (vs. 12).

It had to have been God, because Paul looks back on his life and states that, "formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent" (vs. 13).

- Before his conversion, Paul violently harassed and persecuted Christians, most likely being responsible for many of their deaths.

- But God had shown him mercy! Jesus had come for Paul and saved him in his rebellion.

There was no doubt in Paul's mind that the "grace of our Lord overflowed for me" (vs. 14).

- He did absolutely NOTHING to deserve anything from God but hell, judgment, and condemnation- and yet God showed him grace, mercy, and love.
- None of us in this room have done or will ever be able to do a single thing to earn God's grace, mercy, and love.

When Paul says, "this saying is trustworthy", (vs. 15) he's saying, "pay attention- this is important!"

- Christ Jesus came into the world not to help us be better versions of ourselves or give us more religion & rules- he came to "save sinners".
- Paul then says, "of whom I'm the worst!"
- The stumbling block of the gospel is many refuse to admit the truth that they're sinners.

Paul then offers his own life as a case study of God's goodness, mercy, and patience.

- One reason that God saved him was to offer him as "an example to those who were to believe" (vs. 16).
- If God saved Paul, than no-one can declare their sin too much for God to forgive.
- God's love, patience, and forgiveness is "perfect", rich, and far greater than ours- He's far more loving and forgiving than you think.

PAUL THEN BURSTS INTO PRAISE AND WORSHIP

- "King eternal"- the God of all power and sovereignty.
- "Immortal"- eternal, beyond the reaches of death.
- "Invisible"- beyond the constraints of the physical and the approach of humanity.
- "the only God"- the exclusive, authoritative, supreme being that reigns above all.

It's this God that has saved Paul and that he wants to give all honor and glory forever and ever.

REMAINING FAITHFUL TO THE CALL (1 TIM. 1:18-20)

It's this charge- the charge of presenting the pure, undiluted, truth of the gospel- that Paul had entrusted to Timothy as a spiritual son (vs. 18).

- Timothy's ministry and calling had been "prophesied" about in the past- words from God had been given to other believers that they'd spoken over Timothy about his service.
- It's by receiving this assurance of his calling that Timothy is told to "wage the good warfare".

The "good fight" is the spiritual battle that Timothy is told to engage in.

- Pastoral ministry is most definitely a battle and a struggle with a very present enemy and very real spiritual attacks.
- All Christians are in a battle when they engage in honoring Christ, living in personal holiness, and joining in the mission of God to serve Him and others.

We fight the "good fight" when we "hold to the faith and a good conscience" (vs. 19).

- That simply means we commit to God's truth in all areas of our lives and we commit to live a life that's blameless before God and others.
- When we reject holding to the faith and living a blameless life, we can make "shipwreck of our faith"- we can fall into deception and apostasy.

Hymenaeus and Alexander were two prominent leaders (maybe even elders) mentioned in the Ephesian church who had shipwrecked their faith, wandered from the true gospel, and were spreading false teaching.

- So Paul imposed church discipline on these men by dismissing them from the church ("...handed over to Satan", 1 Cor. 5) because of their sin and deception.

The phrase, "handed over to Satan", simply means to take an individual out of the protective community of the church and Christ's kingdom and hand them over to the kingdom of this world, ruled by Satan.

- It was done to protect those in the church!
- But also so these individuals would realize their errors, recognize the truth and goodness of God's kingdom, and choose to repent and return to God and the church in faith.

A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF VITAL TRUTHS

- Without a proper understanding of the gospel, we can be deceived into thinking that Christianity is simply a list of good ideas and rules to follow.
- Without a proper understanding of our own sin we can become arrogant, proud, and judgmental of those we deem ourselves as better than.
- Without a proper understanding of the battle, we can get confused, discouraged, and despairing whenever following Jesus gets hard.