

Shepherds & Servants 1

Protect The Gospel

1 Timothy 1:1-11

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 1:11

ELEMENTS

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Look if you would with me at **1 Timothy 1:1-3**. This morning we enter into a new sermon series where we will go verse by verse looking at the book of 1 Timothy to see what God commands of the faithful shepherds of his church and the faithful servants of his church. As you can see, the letter is written from Paul. Paul, an apostle of Christ by the command of God. Paul, in one sense is an ordinary man like you and me. He has a troubled past, he's made many mistakes along the way, and by the grace of Christ he was transformed. But in another sense, Paul is much more, because Paul is an apostle of Christ. An apostle was one who was set apart by Christ for the work of building the church and spreading the Gospel across the known world. To our knowledge, there were at least 12 apostles; the eleven disciples minus Judas, and Paul. The apostles were given power to heal, raise the dead, and hear from God the words that were to be written down in the Bible.

Paul was perhaps the greatest of all the apostles, writing most of the New Testament books, and being most responsible for the expansion of the church in the first century. In **Acts 28:31** it says that Paul "boldly and without hindrance preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ." So incase you missed it, Paul had the authority of God to write his Words, and plant his Church! So... when Paul speaks you listen. And when Paul writes you a letter, you take it serious, because it is just as if God were writing it to you!

Here he writes his letter to Timothy. Who is Timothy? Look with me at **Acts 16:1-3**. Timothy was a believer who Paul took under his wing as his primary assistant in the ministry. Of all of Paul's disciples, he speaks of Timothy the most. You could say that Timothy was Paul's second in command. Here in **verse 2** Paul calls him "my true child in the faith." Paul is writing this message specifically to Timothy so that he would continue his ministry in Ephesus. The Ephesian church was very dear to Paul's heart and he wanted to make sure that they did not stray from the faith in his absence. All of this is the setting in which we find ourselves for the foreseeable future.

So what is the primary message that Paul gives to Timothy for the Church of Ephesus? As we will come to find out later, it is for the establishing of church leaders and proper church community. But here Paul simply communicates to Timothy his most pressing matter, that as

the primary Shepherd in Ephesus at the time, Timothy must make sure that the other Shepherds are preaching sound doctrine. By the way, I'm using the term Shepherd here as it communicates what an elder or pastor is primarily supposed to do; shepherd the people of God spiritually. We will get into that topic more in depth later in our study. For now we must focus on the issue at hand; Shepherds must protect the Gospel so that the church won't abandon the Gospel.

The message of Christ as our Lord and God, who redeemed us from our sinful state through the sacrifice of his own life is non-negotiable. The commands He expects us to live according to, in order to show our devotion to him, are inalienable. When we move away from the standard of the Word of God and its precepts, we will inevitably walk away from our faith.

For example, in my second youth ministry I disciplined a student who I thought was all in for Christ. Two years after I left the church he had denounced his faith and wandered into a destructive porn addiction. In my fourth youth ministry I disciplined another student who also walked away from the faith after I left the church. He has since transitioned to a new gender. When people walk away from the truth or the truth is removed from their life, they lose their moral compass; they lose the light, and they wander into darkness.

You see that **the Bible is our plumb line**. A **plumb line** is a tool that has been used in construction for many years. It helps a builder know if a wall or floor is level; if it is true. Without a plumb line everything would get crooked and out of alignment and before long the building would fail. The Bible is what keeps us in alignment with God. The Gospel is what keeps us level and true with our God. Without it our lives begin to fall apart. The main point this morning is simple; **without true Shepherds who protect the integrity of the Gospel, the church will inevitably move out of alignment with God.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see is that... **We Protect The Gospel When We Refute Variant Doctrines**. Look again at **1 Timothy 1:3-4, 6**. The greek word for "other" here is a word that means "strange." According to Paul, the biggest threat to the church at Ephesus was any other doctrine being preached but the Gospel. Any other doctrine or gospel, was not just errant but it was strange; unnatural, variant. As an apostle, Paul had divine authority to declare what was Gospel. Any teaching that deviated from what Paul, or any of the other Apostles taught, was heresy, and must be rejected whole sale.

Why were these doctrines so dangerous? Well, other than straying from the true Gospel, they were filled with myths, endless genealogies, speculation, and disorder. It appears from Paul's letters to Timothy that we can piece together some of what these myths and genealogies were. In **1**

Timothy 4:3 we see that these false teachers were forbidding marriage and requiring abstinence from certain foods. Some of these seems to be a mix of Judaism and the Gospel, which would make sense. The early church would no doubt struggle with leaving their Jewish religion and adhering to the Christian faith. They were also clearly having a hard time accepting some of the new church leaders or even Christ as Lord due to genealogies. If one disputed the genealogy of Jesus or Paul they could cause some to not take them seriously. The Gospel of grace allows everyone to marry if they want, to eat what they want, and it doesn't care about who your daddy or granddaddy was! **The Gospel accepts anyone who has placed their faith in the blood of Christ regardless of lineage or past sins, and without legalistic restrictions.**

These myths and genealogies resulted in meaningless words of which Timothy was warned of in **2 Timothy 2:14**. Ultimately these doctrines, which Paul calls "doctrines of demons" in **1 Timothy 4:1** cause speculation and disorder. Look over at **2 Timothy 2:15-18, 23**. **When we don't accurately handle the Gospel we will wander into irreverent babble, which will spread like a disease leading everyone who hears it astray.** It will cause all kinds of rampant speculation like, "the resurrection of the saints" has already happened. Instead have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies that breed quarrels. All across America today we have strange doctrines being preached. Prosperity Gospel, The New Orthodox Gospel, The Universal Unitarian Gospel, The Affirming Gospel! Its all trash! Don't listen to it, and by all means, if you are a pastor or elder in the church of Christ, don't preach it! **Without true Shepherds who protect the integrity of the Gospel, the church will inevitably move out of alignment with God.**

The second thing we need to see today is that... **We Protect The Gospel When We Reveal The Truth In Love.** Look again at **1 Timothy 1:5**. The reason many swerve from the Gospel is because of this very issue; Love. Now I know I spoke on this a couple of weeks ago so I don't want to belabor this more than necessary. If you need to, just go back and listen to the message; Love doesn't equal acceptance. It covers this entire point. The point is this; The Gospel is a message of the love of Jesus Christ; a love that is so great that it took the death of God himself to save us from our sins. Because of this great love every believer is called to love every single person with a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

Unfortunately, the world doesn't define love by these terms. They want a love that doesn't come from a pure heart. Pure means true and they don't believe in objective truth. In fact, purity to them may be anti-love. They most certainly don't want a love that comes from a good conscience. They want love that comes from corruption and debauchery.

A love that lets them do whatever they want regardless of how wrong it may be. And they don't want a love that comes from a sincere faith. A faith in the Gospel demands that love speaks the truth of sin and they don't want to hear that. To speak the truth of sin is very unloving to them! You see the Gospel is contrary to the love they want. Look again at **1 Timothy 1:9-10**. The Gospel preaches that their sin is ugly and ungodly. Those who live in such sin do not know the love of Christ. They only know the lust of the flesh and in the end they will be damned to hell. Because of this, many so called church leaders have watered down the Gospel to make it more appealing to the lost. If we take out all the sin, then sinners will feel more comfortable with a false Gospel that affirms sin. **The true Gospel will never water down the truth to make sinners feel more comfortable in their sin!** We need men of God who will Shepherd their flocks by protecting the Gospel from a watered down impotent Gospel of affirmation! We must speak the truth in love regardless of what it costs us! **Without true Shepherds who protect the integrity of the Gospel, the church will inevitably move out of alignment with God.**

The last thing we need to see here is that... **We Protect The Gospel When We Refuse To Let Novices Lead.** Look once more at **1 Timothy 1:7**. Where does false, strange Gospels originate from? From people who want to be Shepherds and Elders but are not ready for the task. All they know is that they want to be on the stage or in charge, but in most cases they don't have a strong biblical foundation or sound theology. They don't have a grasp on the true Gospel and so they will easily lose grip of it or play fast and loose with it. They don't have an understanding of what they are actually saying. So what do they do? They say what makes people happy. Or they preach their own opinions. Anything but what the Bible says. And here's the real problem, they say it with confidence. Why are so many people being led astray towards strange doctrines? Why are so many people walking away from the real faith? Because some man calling himself a pastor or church leader has confidently preached half truths and feel good messages which are contrary to the true Gospel! This is why this topic of Shepherds & Servants is so important for our church! In these last days it is necessary that we determine to have the right leaders! We cannot afford to let the wrong people to have a voice. **We must vet every elder, every deacon, and every teacher and make sure that they have been tested and approved according to the Gospel!** **Without true Shepherds who protect the integrity of the Gospel, the church will inevitably move out of alignment with God.**

Application

The application is simple this morning. For churches looking to establish Elders, Pastors, or Deacons; make sure that the men you are

looking at are the real deal! Accept nothing less than spiritual shepherds and servants who protect the Gospel! For those in the church, do not listen to or entertain false Gospels! If it sounds strange it probably is! But how can you know for sure! Test everything you hear against the Word of God! Don't take anyone's word as gospel! Test it against the Gospel and you will stay plumb!

Conclusion

Look if you would at **1 Timothy 1:11** again. As your pastor I have been entrusted by God and by you with the Gospel. I must preach in accordance to it! Your elders must preach in accordance to it! Every thing that is taught in this church must be in accordance with it! We must never water it down or stray from its truth. We must protect the Gospel! If we don't we will fall. **Without true Shepherds who protect the integrity of the Gospel, the church will inevitably move out of alignment with God.**