

1Tim 23-08-20a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday Morning Services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. We continue our study in the Gospel of Timothy, the Epistle to Timothy. And we're resuming this morning in the middle of chapter one.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study, on our time of fellowship, and we'll begin. Father, we are so grateful for this opportunity to spend time together, to be edified and blessed by contact and fellowship and conversation with believers who share an enthusiasm for relationship with you through the Lord Jesus Christ, gaining a better understanding of our place in your plan, what pertains to us now and in the future. We're grateful for our hope, as the Apostle has mentioned in the introduction to this letter.

Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is our hope, and we are so grateful for that confidence and expectation that there is meaning and purpose and definition in our lives, that we are driving toward a goal, and you have provided everything we need to achieve that goal and to be prepared, to be renewed, to be sanctified, to be thoroughly equipped for every good work. And we pray that our study this morning and our fellowship will contribute to that goal. We pray that you will bless us this morning with insight and understanding and a clear knowledge of how these principles apply in our own lives as we live and negotiate the obstacles and challenges in the world around us.

We pray it in Jesus' name, amen. The first epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God, our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.

And you see the span there of the inception. God, our Savior, generally looks back to what God has done to save us, to rescue us from a lost, hopeless, fallen condition, and to place us into His plan and purpose. And then we have Jesus Christ, our hope, and this looks toward the future.

So we have this span that begins at our salvation and goes forward looking ahead to the return of the Lord Jesus. The first advent, our salvation, the second advent, our hope. And it brackets our time of experience.

And we get the expectation that what Paul is going to tell Timothy is pertinent for all believers, certainly the ones that Timothy shepherds in this flock in Ephesus. We had what I thought was a fascinating look at the situation in Ephesus, and the foundation of the church, the years of ministry that Paul spent there, and the investment that God made through His Holy Spirit. And in that teaching, in this congregation, they had ample opportunity to learn and to grow and to be given an understanding of this relatively new church age forward step in the plan of God.

Grace, mercy, and peace, unique here in Paul's epistles, mercy only spoken of to

Timothy. And we're going to see Paul return to this theme of eleos, E-L-E-O-S, mercy. Later in the chapter, you just quickly glance at verse 13, and you're familiar with this.

We've traveled the path of Timothy in the past, enough to know that Paul says, I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy. Paul is very familiar with mercy as a former bane and persecutor of Christians to become an apostle to Christians. I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

The grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus. And this idea of what we have in Christ is also in the introduction. Verse three, as I urged you when I went into Macedonia, remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

And teach no other doctrine, you remember, is all one word, hetero-didaskalos. The verb form of that, that's the noun, but heteros is something of a different kind. And this is a gospel that doesn't just vary in a few minor points, it is qualitatively different.

And Timothy's mission is to charge some that they don't hetero-didaskalos. Teach something that purports to be the gospel and is not. Purports to be doctrine.

This is ever the problem. Jesus condemned the religious leadership of his day for teaching as doctrine the traditions of men. And these were Jewish accretions, additions, expansions, fabulous extrapolations and interpolations in the law that went far beyond God's word and did not reflect his intent.

Here, this is part of the charge. Remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they do not give heed to fables and interminable genealogies. We've looked at this a little bit.

As I said, in Titus, these are qualified as Jewish fables. In 2nd Timothy, Paul returns to characterize these as old wives' tales. So what are these and what is their equivalent in the modern day? I would suggest to you that these genealogies, why would you track your ancestry and make that a part of your identity? It's fun to look back and say, my great-grandparents immigrated, my grandparents immigrated, my family's roots are back in the past, there's Native Americans back in the woodpile, there's French people, there's this type of national origin and you can send your DNA off and they'll tell you if it's European or African or whatever.

It's interesting, it's fun. People do it as a hobby and try to trace the family's history here in America. If you've got several generations here, did they start on the East Coast in the colonies and move through Kentucky and Tennessee and come West? It can be fascinating at times.

It's fun to look back and it does give us a bit of a sense of place. But here, Paul says this kind of genealogy, genealogy A, it's endless and limitless. People can't get off of the subject.

It isn't that the genealogy stretches back so far that it's limitless, everybody reaches the end of what they know. Even in Israel, once you get back to the original tribe of Judah or Benjamin or Simeon or Levi and well, you know the history all the way back to Adam from there, well, that's the end. You can look at the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ given in both Matthew and Luke and there are specific generations and it's set.

Why would it be a limitless genealogy? Because people can't get off the topic. People can't leave it alone. The equivalent today I would suggest is identity politics.

I view life, my goals, my objectives, my subjectivity is of the nature of identity. And in the days that Paul is writing, it was what is your heritage, your physical ancestry. In the modern day, this takes many forms.

It's gender-based or transgender-based or it is a nationality or an ethnicity or some racial identity. And to put on the clothes and as one songwriter has said, you can wave it like a flag and wear it like a crown. And it never ends.

Day by day, week by week, month by month. And you judge others by their sensitivity or their affirmation or their acceptance of this absorbed identity. It's divisive.

It leads to disputes rather than edification. When you separate and distinguish yourself in this fashion, what are you not doing? The spirit of unity, the bond of peace, one Lord, one faith, one doctrine, one God and father of us all. How many times have we seen in the scriptures the essential emphasis on unity? We are brothers and sisters in Christ.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away. All things are become new.

So to dwell on this is what distinguishes me from you. I have some famous Roman empire guy in my past. I've got some British king in my past.

I'm descended from French royalty or there's a Duke or a Earl or my country of origin invented the wheel or whatever it might be. We are dwelling on distinctions and when it is endless, people don't get past it. To have it be endless, have it be a source of disputes and division and contentions.

This is what identity politics does in the modern day. People can't let it go and they demand things on the basis of these identities. So what should our attitude be? We're nobody I know in our periphery is suffering from this problem.

We're on the other end. How should we treat those who grab these things and affirm them? It can be your political leanings. It can be your social policy beliefs.

It can be your notions about traditional features of our society and our culture. Do you or don't you believe in marriage? Do you or don't you believe in socialism? Do you or don't

you fill in the blank here? We're not so much worried about being perpetrators and notice that Paul is not telling Timothy, make sure you are not a perpetrator of these things. What is Timothy's charge? You as a pastor must charge some.

Paul begins by establishing his apostolic authority. He doesn't typically, he doesn't use his typical greeting, Paul, a slave, a doulos of Jesus Christ. He says, I'm an apostle and I am charging you as the authority in the Ephesian church, charge these that they teach no different in form and content doctrine.

And this doctrine seemed to affirm. You have churches today that are spending a lot of time endeavoring to promote toleration and acceptance and to not be seen as intolerant or separatist by going out of their way to promote and affirm diversity. The church is not a place of diversity.

There may be diverse people who come to the church, but the church is a place of unity. We are one in Christ, one in faith, one in hope, one in love, one in doctrine. You can quibble about non-essentials, but there are essentials.

What is the nature of the work of Christ on the cross? Was it substitutionary atonement or was he just up there giving people an example of how bad people can be to each other and hoping to afflict our conscience? Did he satisfy the righteousness and the justice of God on our behalf? Or was he just appealing to us that by allowing horrific things to happen to himself, we would respond to a ripple in our conscience and try to be better people? This is a different doctrine. The Bible says he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That is penal substitutionary atonement.

He made him, God made the Son, God the Father made the Lord Jesus Christ to be sin for us. He made him. He didn't allow him to be an example and manifestation of our sin.

God made him sin. God judged him for sin. He bore our sins in his body on the tree, Peter says.

He bore our sins. He didn't reflect our sins. He didn't try to get us to become conscious of our sins in that.

It is penal substitutionary atonement. There's been an enormous attack on that doctrine. That is another doctrine because it changes the nature of salvation.

I am no longer placing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as my substitute, as my savior, as the one who is the author and finisher of my faith. He's just a good man appealing to my better nature. And you wind up down the road of the Arminians.

Jacob Arminius believed that there was intrinsic good in everybody and you could activate that good if you so chose. We are hopeless, helpless, and useless. It is a

different doctrine.

And it is rife in the modern day because when you begin to compromise, you begin to be selective. Selectivity in the scripture is the path to error. It is the path to heterodoxy.

It is the path to ending up blaspheming God. And editing Jesus Christ into our desired image. God created man in his own image.

Man has spent all of human history since trying to create God in his own image. And people who are persuaded by identity politics, by the notable failures in human history and of the past and human culture in the present. And they are shocked and horrified at the abuses that were perpetrated under slavery, at the injustices that have been perpetrated against people of different races and colors and backgrounds and ethnicities.

And it isn't just whites versus blacks. And it's because they don't teach history anymore. Many people don't understand the persecution of the Irish, the persecution of Native Americans, the persecution of Asians in this country, the prejudice against Hispanics.

There has been no end of man's humanity to man. And we look at this and we are shocked by it. And certainly, especially in the American South, people who went to church on Sunday and put a white mask on and hung people from trees during the week, that's not Christianity.

And yet somebody is going to church and believing that they're doing God's work. That's a different doctrine. And when you get into a group and everybody affirms the same thing and you are not seeking the whole counsel of God, every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, you're glossing over details, you're ignoring passages, you're not searching the scripture to see if these things are so, you're finding a verse that you can get to fit and proof text your preconceived belief, this is error.

Paul tells Timothy the antidote for this. The antidote for this is not being prophetic and calling it out. That's like saying, well, we can end smoking in this country if we just tell everybody it causes cancer.

Telling people that doesn't cause the cessation of smoking any more than showing pictures of the slaughter of unborn fetuses stops abortion. People know, and they do it anyway. What is the antidote? Change of mind.

And we saw this when we went to the Lord Jesus talking to Ephesus in Revelation chapter two. Remember that, repent, change your mind and do the first works that reflect the first love. First in importance, first in priority, first as the definition of who you are.

Remember from where you have fallen, you have lost your first love, your love for God

and the works, the first works that are a direct expression of that first love. First works come from the first love. I do what I do because I love the Father and I appreciate and I am so grateful for His grace.

So what is Paul's antidote? What should our response be to these developments and these trends, these winds of doctrine that are blowing and these departures from Orthodox faith? Orthodox, it's straight doctrine. The solution is not, there's people who say, well, we need to be prophetic. We need to go out and call out error and call out people who are leading people down a path.

This is the difference between discernment and judging. It is one thing to discern amongst ourselves and say, there are people who I can name for you who are teaching other doctrine, but I'm not interested in pillorying them in public. I am not going out and demonstrating and standing up in the midst of their conversations or posting under their videos and vilifying them and name calling and backbiting and that would be judging.

Discernment, I can point out that there are those who, and I can occasionally give you a name, if it's Bart Ehrman and he used to be a conservative evangelical seminary professor and he has now thrown over the notion that the scriptures are the word of God or that they are inspired, they're entirely a human creation in his view and he's making a lot of money selling books, deceiving people into believing that that is true. I will tell you his name, but I don't go out and try to destroy the man or it is a matter of identification and discernment. Paul is going to do it in this chapter when you get down to verse 20.

There are those who have rejected faith and a good conscience and concerning the faith, they have suffered shipwreck among whom are, and Paul names them for Timothy, Hymenaeus and Alexander and they are now in Satan's hands. Paul says, I've surrendered them to Satan. We'll see that when we get there.

There is nothing wrong with identifying sources of hetero didaskalia, teaching that is antithetical and opposite to and does not partake of the genuine gospel that comes from the inspired scriptures. So charge some that they do not originate, perpetrate, communicate things that are not scriptural truth, and that's the origination side of it, nor give heed, don't listen to it. And then for conciseness sake, he says this alternate doctrine is that there is merit in your identity that comes from some source other than Christ.

The genealogy, well, these are my human connections. This is what brought me forth. This is what defines me.

This is what makes me who I am, are these human ancestral connections or any other fill in the blank connection that I want to adopt as my identity. This causes disputes rather than godly edification. Nobody gets edified if I tell you, let me show you the steps all the way back to whoever that guy is.

I never can, it's not Constantine, it's the other one. Everybody is related to him. Anybody with any European blood at all, you eventually go back to Charlemagne.

Yeah, yeah, everybody, I promise you, everybody on the planet that's got any European extraction at all, you are related to Charlemagne. Everybody is. But the, oh, I'm a daughter of the American Revolution or I'm a Mayflower person or whatever.

No problem going back and it's interesting, it can be fun. You might have a few artifacts from your kinfolks of the past, but if it defines you, if you divide from people, if you demand respect and special treatment because of it, that's a problem. So don't teach it and don't give heed to it.

And this is an example of a larger truth that in general, anything that we embrace, that we espouse, that we communicate or that we accept and talk about that begins to foster dispute rather than edification, let it go, let it go. We should be looking for those things we have in common and that unite us, not those things that separate us and divide us in the sphere of non-essential things. Paul talks about this.

There are those who observe days and feasts, others treat every day alike. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind on non-essentials. The nature of the work of Christ on the cross is not non-essential.

You can't misunderstand that. You can't recast it and recharacterize it and redefine it and be in the gospel of grace anymore. You have changed it to a different gospel and suspiciously it lines up with secular society who embraces and shares those very same values.

Love not the world or the things that are in the world. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed. If you find that your gospel and your biblical understanding suddenly is very harmonious and sympathetic with the world, that's the time to take a hard look.

Jesus says, the world is gonna hate you. If the world doesn't hate you, you must look an awful lot like them. They shouldn't hate us if we are exclusive.

You find a famous pastor getting interviewed and being pressed on the topic of, so are you saying that all of the Hindus that have ever lived and all of the Buddhists that have ever lived and all of the Muslims that have ever lived and all of the Jews that have ever lived that don't accept Jesus Christ as their savior, that they are all bound for eternal hell? Well, you know, dissembling, deflecting, squirting ink and disappearing behind it. The simple answer is yes. No man comes to the father but by Christ.

He that hath the son hath life. He that hath not the son of God hath not life. That's what scripture says.

Is it unacceptable to the world? Yes, but it should not be unacceptable to Christians.

There are now Christians who say, well, you know, ideally you understand the Lord Jesus, but you know, God is like Jesus and Jesus accepted everybody. So my lens of the father, if you see me, you've seen the father, that's what Jesus said.

Well, Jesus didn't turn anybody away. And so God's not gonna turn everybody and you end up in universalism. That is a false doctrine.

God is not going to accept everybody. And I tell you that on the authority of the word of God, there are people at the great white throne judgment that will be cast into the lake of fire. Look at your sheep and goats judgment from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself.

There are people whom the Lord Jesus calls dogs and pigs in the sermon on the mount that people want to embrace and make the definition of everything related to God. It's all peace and love. And children walking through fields of daisies, hand in hand with Jesus, He accepts everybody.

He never launched a war. Jesus didn't mount a white charger and go slaughtering armies and blood as high as the bridles and the rest of it, except He does. But we shut one eye and can't see out of the other.

And so revelation is figurative and elusive. And He's talking about our sins. He's gonna slaughter our sins and they will die and their blood will splatter.

It's not real people. And anyway, He's just predicting what's gonna happen in 70 AD. And listen, nothing like revelation happened in 70 AD.

Look at Revelation 9, 16, 200 million entities are going to attack. The Chinese can't launch 200 million people and support them with logistics. So what is that 200 million? We've talked about this recently in our update to what's going on in the contemporary world.

And with technology, you can. You can launch surveillance and attack drones. You can launch unmanned aircraft.

You can launch smart artillery projectiles, smart missiles, smart bombs. Just think of it incrementally. Was there a time when nobody could imagine shooting 200 million bullets? Because you had to pack them in one at a time with a ramrod? They run through 200 million bullets on rifle ranges for practice now.

Well, just move forward when you start giving bullets larger size, greater capacity, intelligence, guidance, computer control. Yes, you can attack someone with 200 million agents who will go in to destroy. That's now, that's only been possible in very recent history because revelation is future.

We are not preterists. I am certainly not a preterist. I don't believe that you can dispense

with revelation as having all been fulfilled and figurative and rhetorical and exaggeration and hyperbolic and the rest of it that people want to say.

They don't want to think about the future. Jesus Christ is our hope and that hope is expressed in the revelation in some of its most fulsome language. But people who adopt another doctrine lose that hope, redefine prophetic scripture.

They want to be prophetic, but they don't want to let John be prophetic. They want to talk about social justice, but they don't want to talk about spiritual growth, spiritual weaponry in the unseen conflict. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but the gospel of today says it's all about what's happening with flesh and blood.

If you can get some social justice going and lift up some random oppressed person and some random poor people and some random refugees, spiritual definitions don't matter. Do you ever hear the social justice, social gospel people saying, we need to have an eye on salvation. We need to have an eye on evangelization.

We need to be first helping those who are in the household of faith. What does Paul say in another place? Do your best to live peaceably with all and to do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. That requires discernment.

Is somebody a fellow believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Do they care about their spiritual identity? That makes a difference in the good that you do according to the word of God. That's all been brushed aside. And it is in swaths.

Most of us are somewhat isolated from mainstream Christianity and the big moving pieces and the influencers and the voices and those who have tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of followers and people who read their books and listen to their tapes and watch their videos and follow their ministries. Look at the roster of entities on your major Christian broadcast networks and find out who these are and then listen carefully to what they're saying. They are not saying what Paul's saying in almost all cases.

There are a few exceptions, but even in those exceptions, you really have to watch. I am endeavoring here to fulfill the charge that Paul gives to Timothy as the representative pastor of a church. And I am charging us not to give heed, not to give traction and credibility to fables.

It's very interesting in Greek here, fables and endless genealogies, grammatically in Greek, they are tied together. These stories are the result of and are linked to and a part of the genealogies. So you have a whole worldview.

These stories surround and provide context for these endless identities that people want to embrace. And so the identity says, because I am from this background or this connection or this ethnicity or this gender entered understanding of myself, you should

now do this and this law should be changed and this practice should be abolished and this governmental money should be available. And this should happen in courts and this should happen in various areas of life.

People should be forced to accept the identity that I have documented. This is the fable. This is the application.

It is pseudo scripture with a pseudo spirit of understanding and application. It is a false way of living that is a pale substitute and counterfeit of what we are supposed to be doing. And the counterfeit always breeds dispute, encourages and fosters sin and human good and evil and distracts and deflects believers from the right path, from the unity of faith, from the laying hold of righteousness by faith and from Jesus Christ, our hope.

Our hope is not in social change. Our hope is not in social justice. Our hope is not in, well, if we elect somebody that'll have better policies, if we can get better laws passed by Congress, if you've got any expectation of goodness coming out of our government, you're doomed to disappointment.

I don't care who they elect. There was somebody, I think Matt, what's his name? Gates from Florida was calling somebody on the carpet in a congressional hearing and really roasting him, getting his feet on the fire. And the comment afterward was from a conservative news source that's great that they're calling that out, but do you notice that this happens all the time and it's a sideshow? Nothing changes.

There's no new law. There's no prosecution. They call these people out.

They catch them in the act. They get them to confess that yes, government was used to persecute somebody for political ends. They as much as admit it, they are outed, but nothing changes.

Why? There's no Holy Spirit in Congress. Generally speaking, there's no Holy Spirit in the White House. And there's no Holy Spirit in the court system and in the legal system.

It is a human effort to try to achieve things and it inevitably fails. Our hope is in Christ. And that's not just for society.

That's not just for the nation. That's not just for friends and family. It is for us personally.

If we hope to change, if we hope to improve, if we hope to succeed when we wrestle against the principalities and powers, if we hope to overcome sin and evil in our own lives, our hope is in Jesus Christ. It's actually here, Christ Jesus. The best Greek texts, it is Christ Jesus.

In the same way that Paul leads with his apostleship in the introduction here, he says, God, our Savior, and Christ Jesus. When you see Christos, it has the aspect of

Messiahship, but in the Greek world, it meant the anointed, the authorized one, the designated one. He is the anointed one, Yeshua, Jesus.

He is the one that is authorized. He has the power. He has the commission.

He has the position from God, the Father, our Savior, to be our hope. Our hope is in Christ. Personally, within our families, within our church, and certainly within our extended community in our nation, this world is not our home.

We want to exist in it and shine as lights and trust that we will be qualified, equipped, and prepared to speak the truth to others so that they can come to God, the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and be part of the unity and fellowship that we enjoy, the community that we enjoy. So that's the thrust. That is the opening.

This is the point of the spear in the epistle to 1 Timothy. Well, we'll pick up here in verse five and following, and we'll come back from the break.