

1Tim 23-08-20b

Let's pick up our study now in 1st Timothy. We're going to also pick up our pace a little bit. The goal in verse 5, if we're not giving heed to distracting and divisive false teachings, the goal of adhering to sound doctrine is love.

There's been a lot of emphasis on Christian love in the recent days. The Progressive Church, the Deconstruct-Reconstruct folks, the Sermon on the Mount people, the social justice people, the Accept-Everybody Universalists are quick to emphasize love. You can get that from everybody from John Lennon to innumerable sources in the modern day.

Notice that in this inspired revelation from the Apostle Paul, the commandment has as its goal love. Without the fulfillment of the commandment, there can't be love. You can't get to love without sound teaching, sound biblical understanding.

This is very helpful to us. I want to not only be loved, but to love with a quality that is genuinely beneficial to others. If you're in a family, you can be a couple, you can be a family, you can be an extended family, you can be a fellowship in a church, you can have close friends that stick just like family.

We want the quality of our love to be such that it is a genuine blessing. It has substance, it has durability, it has this quality of God's divine love for us. We love because He first loved us.

How does God express His love toward us? God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. God's love expressed itself even though we weren't perfect, even though we were separated from Him. Who is it that benefits from God's love? Those who accept it, those who recognize it and enter into it by faith.

We are not saved by love. God loved the world and sent His Son, but that love does not save us. What does Ephesians 2.8 say? For by love are you saved, for by grace are you saved through love.

What are the components that fulfill and give substance and expression to God's love? God's grace expressed God's love with the Lord Jesus as our substitutionary sacrifice. Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us. The Passover lamb wasn't an expression of God's love.

People being mean to sheep. That lamb was selected out of the flock as being without spot and without blemish and was consciously with purpose and forethought brought and prepared and sacrificed. The person bringing the sacrifice, the person making the sacrifice brought that sheep and this was a positive thing.

It is an expression of divine truth. It is a picture of divine love. The sacrifice of the lamb is an expression of love and of substitution.

The lamb does what cannot be done by sacrificing the person. Substitutionary atonement is one of the clearest pictures in Scripture and it is widely rejected and widely criticized with a lot of attitude behind it. How can you think that God would perpetrate human sacrifice and slaughter His Son as He is so vindictive and so demanding and they caricature God and then destroy that straw man.

God's love and God's grace are expressed at the cross but it requires acceptance. The love that we express is almost entirely within the household of faith. Love one another.

Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. God has not forgiven the world. The Lord Jesus Christ bore the sins of the world and that creates the potential for forgiveness but the world is not forgiven.

Why do you think the world is going to be destroyed and the elements are going to melt with the fervent heat? Why do you think there are going to be so many people at the Great White Throne Judgment that are cast into the lake of fire and are no more? Because they are not forgiven. Forgiveness only comes through the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship with Him and He with us. Fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us. I am dwelling on this because if you are not really paying attention you don't realize the paradigm shift that has taken place in the confessing church, the American church, the European church, the church worldwide and now it is all on your phone screen and your computer screen.

Listen to people who are influencing and preaching and affecting the understanding of millions upon millions of alleged Christians. And it isn't about atonement. If the blood of Jesus Christ is not the basis for forgiveness first John is not real scripture.

The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. Not only do we have the potential for forgiveness at the point that Jesus Christ dies on the cross it is retroactive. The sins that were recorded and put on hold in the Old Testament age are brought to the fore and covered by the blood of Christ.

For those who acknowledge them for those who claimed God's grace in cleansing and forgiveness read Psalm 51. Retroactively we have the potential for cleansing. It is not just forgiveness but also cleansing.

He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us. Sin has an after effect. I was out here brush hogging it was after dark and the pin that goes through the spindle and attaches the drive shaft via splines and keeps it from sliding off it sheared.

And suddenly I hear this horrendous rattling and knocking noise and I look back there and the

drive shaft is just bouncing all over the place and it is disconnected from the tractor. And I think well okay think of this as an example of sin. This is a disconnect.

This is something that is wrong and needs to be righted. So what I need to do is reconnect this drive shaft to this rotating spindle that sticks out of the back of the tractor. It has got these splines and there is a female splined socket on the drive shaft and there is this post sticking out this rotating post.

There is a hole drilled through both and you put the pin through that holds it all together. Well the pin is gone it came off rattling sounds like a collapse in the warehouse. So after everything stops rotating and I go back there I think well I will put this back on and that will fix it.

However there are consequences to it coming off. Once it is down there and the little universal joint goes to a right angle it dug a big hole and was covered in mud and it splashed dirt and mud up on the back of the tractor. So it is not enough to reconnect what was disconnected.

Forgiveness reconnects us to what is disconnected but I can't just stick that thing back on there is dirt and mud everywhere. There needs to be cleansing. You see how my mind works when I am mowing.

You have the autonomic reflex system that drives the tractor I have done it for hundreds if not thousands of hours. But I was thinking about this. There are two things that have to take place.

One thing happened it came off that is sin. Two things have to happen to restore the previous condition. Reconnection but before that reconnection there also has to be cleansing.

The tractor is not going to accept a dirty drive shaft. God cannot accept uncleansed unsanctified people into his family fellowship. We need forgiveness and cleansing.

People who are not willing to acknowledge that sin defiles, that sin corrupts, that sin pollutes, that sin has consequences beyond the act itself. You can prevaricate, you can lie, you can deceive and that act of telling a half truth or a falsehood is a sin in and of itself. But when you deceive, remember the old saw oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.

The deception has ripples, it has consequences, it has results, it has an impact. And what about those? You can say oh sorry I lied. Well but as a result of that lie look at everything that happened.

I turned across traffic and that turn was wrong but what about the motorcyclist who broadsided you and flipped over your car and broke 19 bones or was killed? I can confess that I turned across traffic without signaling and without waiting and without looking and oh I made a wrong turn, sorry about that. What about the consequences? Forgiveness and cleansing. We need both.

And what an expression of the grace of God that not only does He no longer charge to our

account the wrong turn, but He will now address the consequences of that sin. He will cleanse us from unrighteousness that ripples out and has secondary and tertiary effects. What a tremendous and supernatural work of God.

Grace that is greater than all our sin. Well Paul is talking about that and that has to be squared away before love can be expressed. There has to be sanctification, there has to be cleansing, there has to be confession, there has to be acknowledgment, there has to be like-mindedness.

Homo logeo to confess means to say the same thing. I view this sin the way God views it. It is wrong, it is a sin against God and it has had repercussions in the horizontal realm against people around me.

I must appeal to God and His grace to forgive me and to cleanse me from the unrighteousness that that sin produces and that that sin is a part of. We have seen many times that I can't know all of the unrighteousness that I produce. I can identify the sin and I will confess the sin that I examine myself to see if I am in the faith.

I realize that I have had a burst of temper, I have wronged somebody, I have spoken, I have cut with my words, I have either committed a sin of omission or commission in the realm of actions, I have had a bad attitude, I have harbored grudges, I have harbored sin, I have been vindictive and implacable, I have gossiped, whatever it is I have done I can recognize and confess that to God. But there are other things that I don't even know about myself. I don't know what I don't know.

But God will not only forgive my confessed sins but cleanse me from all unrighteousness. What a tremendous grace. And we love because He first loved us and His love for us is because we are in Christ.

I am not lovely, I don't have lovable intrinsic qualities. The Lord Jesus is intrinsically the object of the Father's love and I am in Christ. And I owe the attention and the grace that I receive from the Father directly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

God our Savior, Christ Jesus our hope. The purpose, the goal of the commandment is love. But not just any old love.

It's not blind love, it's not indiscriminate love, it's not available and expressed to just any old body. First of all, remember how He said you've got to charge them that they don't originate false doctrine, other doctrine, heteros doctrine. That was the origination side.

That's the origination of the teaching. The goal of pure teaching, the goal of a right understanding, rightly dividing the word of truth is that right teaching is the means by which God creates in us a pure heart. Here's your pop quiz question for the session.

By what means can your heart be purified? What are the available heart is defiled, heart is corrupt, heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, Jeremiah 17.9. David prays in

51 of Psalms, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit. So what is the agency by which a heart is purified? It is the word of God. Are there any other agencies by which the heart is purified, by which the mind is renewed, by which the right spirit is restored? The answer is no.

God uses His word. Psalm 119.11. Thy word hath purified my heart. Have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee? The word prevents sin from originating in the heart when we pay attention to it.

Your word, Psalm 119.105, is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Your word keeps me walking the narrow road, heading through the straight gate. It's the word.

This is so helpful. I spent a youth in Sunday school being told how I ought to be, but the means was not explained. Well, you need to do your chores with a good attitude.

You need to not pick on your brothers and sister. You need to do this. You need to be that.

You need to say this. You need to not do or say that. Okay, but simply deciding is like deciding to quit a bad habit.

The decision itself does nothing. I need the power to calm, the power to quit, as the old Nicorette commercial used to say. Where's the power come from? Well, can you think of a verse that talks about power? Do you have a verse that says the Holy Spirit is powerful? Do you have a verse that says commitment is powerful or that repentance is powerful? There is no such verse.

What does scripture say about itself? The word of God is alive and powerful. The power to not sin. The power to have a pure heart so that I can love.

The source of genuine, divinely inspired, shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit love is the word of God. All of this celebratory talk about love and beneficence and love your enemies to good to those who hate you and love one another, love everybody, love this guy, love that guy, love this person, love this cause, love this group. Fine, but love has a source.

Love has a purpose and it has a divine power behind it and we obtain it from the word. The goal of the charge that no false doctrine gets taught and that people don't give heed to stories and what do stories do? They create a perspective. They create an application landscape, a canvas upon which we interpret events and make decisions and express our values and so on.

Well, right doctrine, the goal of preserving it and getting people to listen to it and to teach it is love. That love, the reason this is going to work, the reason right teaching, the reason a good grasp of the word of God, which is why everybody is here today. We are all looking to understand the word of God as well as we can.

If we detect that we're having trouble in relationships, we're having trouble with the interactions we have with others and you say, you know, I wish I had the kind of love and perspective

knowing when to stand up and when to yield, when to hold the line and when to compromise or let something go. What are essentials? What are non-essentials? What do I need to lash myself to and, you know, die defending this hill and what can I accept, go along to get along? I need wisdom for that. Love does not tell you what's essential and non-essential.

Does it? This is why hardened repeat criminals, when they're about to be sentenced for the fourth or fifth time and I've had this experience as a juror, their mother will get on the stand and talk about, oh, little Johnny, you know, it's not his fault. I dropped him. He had a bad life.

His father left and, you know, sympathy. I just love him. He's got a dog and he loves his dog and love will not help you discern what is just and what is right and what is true.

Love is blind, according to the old aphorism. Listen to Paul Simon. My mama loves me.

She loves me like the rock of ages. Good, bad, you know, you can count on your mom to love you and it's a wonderful truth, but love does not inform us and doesn't direct us aright. There's all kinds of love in the fallen world and there are certain loves that are illegitimate.

Love not the world or the things that are in the world. That's a command. We tend to want to love them anyway.

What keeps us from loving them? What prevents our love from going astray and being misdirected and misapplied? The word of God. It is alive and powerful. It gets right at the thoughts and intents of the heart.

What is the originating source of love? It is the heart and it is an expression of thoughts and intents within the heart. How do we know what we should intend and what we should express? What we should think? It is the word of God. So the goal is instruction and the purpose of that instruction is love.

From a pure heart, the only thing powerful enough to purify our heart is the word of God, to guide our heart, to keep it within the lines. And a good conscience, our moral standards, our sense of what is right and what is wrong. And sometimes what is right means that I've got to hold love in abeyance.

I always think about the Jesus parable of the prodigal son. There's a father and he has two sons. One of the sons, the younger son says, give me my inheritance.

I want to go do my own thing. The father lets him go and he goes to a far country. He wastes his inheritance on riotous living and ends up with nothing and he's slopping the hogs.

A Jewish son slopping swine, eating their food. During that whole time, does the father continue to love that son? Yes, he does. How much contact, how much expression of that love does the father engage in? Zero.

He doesn't send appeal after appeal via a servant. He doesn't come and visit the son himself and hold out his hands and say, son, please come back to me. Don't you see what you're doing to yourself? Look at the waste.

Look at what you've done with your inheritance. The father stays home. Why? That love is not going to have an effect.

It isn't going to change anything by its expression because what is required is not greater expressions of love to turn the person's heart. That person has to repent and change his own mind. When he says, my father's servants live better than I'm living, I will return to my father.

I will go. He changes his mind. He's no longer interested in pursuing this bad course and hitting bottom so to speak, changes his mind.

When he returns to the father, because of that repentance and because of that return, the father is free to get the clean robe and the ring and slay the fatted calf and have a feast. Love has to be guided by principle. It has to come from a good conscience as well as a pure heart.

And it has to be an expression of genuine faith informed by what counts. Our goals, values, and priorities have to be a reflection of faith. I have to trust that if I am the father of the prodigal and the prodigal has gone away, I have to trust that God is at work, that the Holy Spirit will convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

That in God's time and in God's way and perhaps through someone else besides me, the prodigal will come to a consciousness and come to a place of repentance and will return. To arrogantly assume that I know enough and I can say enough to change someone's heart or I can love them hard enough and long enough and deeply enough, I can love them back, I can persuade them back, I can argue them back, I can wheedle them back, I can cajole, is not a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. A sincere faith knows that God is at work to will and to do for His good purpose.

To trust God's timing, sincere faith, I will trust that God knows what He's doing, that God loves people in my periphery more than I do. And what is God doing? Is God intervening? Is God sending Jesus to stand at the foot of their bed in the middle of the night? No. God is at work.

God knows. God understands timing. God knows the thoughts and intents of every heart.

Don't intrude and meddle and interfere and complicate and muddy water that God is busy clarifying. Leave it in God's hands. That takes faith.

Love from a pure heart. I've got to first of all look at myself and make sure that my heart is pure and that I don't have selfish motives. Well, I love this person and I want to help them, but what am I really saying? Well, it would make me feel good if things were different.

I would be gratified. I would be benefited. My pure heart has to be properly motivated and it has to be aware of what is actually right and what is actually wrong.

And I have to be trusting God in a genuine and durable fashion to work His will in His time and in His way and not run in there and gum up the works. From which, verse 6, some, having strayed, have turned aside. Notice the aorist participle.

Having strayed, have turned aside. There is a straying that leads to a turning aside. They didn't turn aside and then stray.

What did they stray from that caused them to turn aside? Proper love. The goal of the instruction is love. This is love that is sourced in, powered by, guided by, conditioned by God's word.

People who stray from that love, sourced in God, powered by God's word, informed, enabled, and guided by God's spirit. The word is nothing without the spirit. And Paul is going to get to that.

But some having strayed, if you get off of the foundation, if you begin to have faulty love and assumptions and fables and identities that aren't sourced in the word of God and aren't a part of God's plan and ends up splitting and dividing people into a non-unified stance, having strayed, some having strayed, have turned aside to useless talk. A lot of conversation, no progress, no profit, no substance, no building up. It's yak, yak, yak.

You hate to even turn some forms of media on anymore because everybody's got an opinion, everybody's got a view. What about this? What about that? Talk, talk, talk, talk. And it doesn't change anything.

It doesn't build up. It doesn't unify. It doesn't produce a result.

It is just talking for the sake of talking. It expends time. It diverts attention.

It distracts. It partakes of things that are not fruitful, that don't produce the fruit of the spirit, love and joy and peace and patience, gentleness, genuine goodness, faith, humility, self-control. None of them are fostered or encouraged or in any way boosted by this kind of communication.

It's just idle talk. Look at verse 7, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. In a nutshell, in Paul's day, this was the Judaizers.

They want to teach the law, but they're not really teaching the law. Can you think of an occasion in earlier days when this was the case? Think about Matthew 5. Turn back to Matthew 5 in the vicinity of verse 21. You remember, because of your in-depth knowledge of the structure of the Bible in general and the New Testament in particular, that the Sermon on the Mount is Matthew 5-7.

So remember, beginning in verse 21 and extending through verse 37, Jesus has that six-fold, you

have heard it said, but I say. These are people who desire to teach and invoke the law, but they don't understand what they're saying. You've heard people say, you shall not murder.

You've heard it said, you shall not commit adultery. You've heard it said, whoever divorces, just write out a piece of paper. You have heard it said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

You have heard it said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. This extends actually down through verse 48. You have heard it said, people are desiring to teach the law and to perpetrate applications of the law.

Jesus said, they don't understand the law. They're misusing it. In our day, this is the entirety of the scriptures.

People will misuse the New Testament. They will misuse the Sermon on the Mount itself. They will, by emphasizing some things and deemphasizing others, distort it and twist it and pervert it.

Did you ever have a throw rug and one edge of it starts curling up? I just put a piece of gorilla tape on the bottom of a rug that's been annoying me for some weeks. It's a rug. It's a good rug.

It's got rubber on the back, but the rug is distorted. It's been washed a couple too many times and now it doesn't lie flat. I can say there's nothing different about this rug other than its shape.

It's the same rug, got the same nap, got the same rubber on the back, but it's been distorted. If you distort a thing, it can trip you. That's what we have here.

They desire to be teachers of the law. They're saying this is what scripture says, so follow my lead here. This is what you should do based on scripture.

This false teaching is perpetrated by people who are citing the law in so doing. Well, they're looking at the same law as the Lord Jesus, but they're not coming up with the same result. Why? They don't desire to see the law followed.

They desire to be the teacher of the law. And anyone who engages in the teaching of the word of God or the presentation of what purports to be truth, whether it is orthodox or heterodox, if they're in it for personal recognition, if they're in it because they're going to get something out of it, that is the road to ruin. They desire to be teachers.

I want to be looked up to. I want to be followed. I want to be emulated.

I want to be a source and be put on some kind of an elevation. Instead of a lance corporal slinging the ash on the mess decks. Nobody elevates that guy.

Nobody looks up to him. He'll get in trouble if he doesn't do it right, but he isn't invited to strategy meetings. It's not his job.

People eat the food. They go to the strategy meetings. They're enabled and empowered by the food to be majors and light colonels and lieutenant commanders and commanders and captains.

They get enabled and empowered to do what they're supposed to do. I'm just a food organizer, cooker and provider. I don't even originate the food.

Somebody hands me the potatoes, I peel them, mash them, put them in a pot, scoop them onto the plate. Nothing glorious about that, and there shouldn't be. But there are people who want to glorify that office and they understand neither what they say or the things that they affirm.

Even when they're looking at the law, which should be affirmed, they don't get the point. This is Jesus in Matthew 5. You've heard it said, there's people citing the law and they're screwing it up in six different ways. You've heard him say six ways to Sunday? Well, that's the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5. You've heard people citing the law and they're fouling it up.

What a tragedy. Knowing this, verse 9, the law, in our case, you can substitute the scriptures. That's all they had in those days was the law.

The law was put for the law of the prophets and the writings, the Old Testament, the Bible, the scriptures. The scriptures are not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless, the insubordinate, the ungodly, for sinners, for the unholy, unprofane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, fornicators, sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. The scriptures define what is not true, what is not right, what is not proper, as well as what is.

And what is the role of the law? What is the role of the scriptures? The scripture hath concluded all under sin. By the law comes the knowledge of sin. Remember that great chapter in Romans? Paul is going through this whole thing in great detail in Romans 6, 7, and 8. Really the whole book of Romans.

But especially, by the law comes the knowledge of sin. I was doing well, but the law came, sin revived, and I died. Recognizing sin.

This is what the Holy Spirit does with the Word of God. Convicts the world of sin and righteousness. The difference between the two.

If you blur the lines between sin and righteousness, oh, it's okay. Judgment will follow. Sin has to be dealt with.

Righteousness has to be acquired through faith in Jesus Christ and through ongoing faith in the Word of God. And judgment can result in benefit and inheritance and blessing rather than discipline and punishment and loss. To blur that over, to teach a different doctrine, to confuse and distort and waffle and compromise, leaves these people unaddressed and unconvicted.

So people who are lawless, their lawlessness is overlooked. People who are ungodly and who practice sin in an ongoing fashion, let him who sins be sinning still. Let him who is unclean be unclean still.

You go to the end of Revelation. The unholy and profane, if we are engaging in, practicing, and immersed in unholiness and profanity, that which is worldly, earthly, temporary, ephemeral, of no value, shallow, leads to disputes, not to edification, we don't get fixed because the Scripture is not properly understood, taught, absorbed, and applied. These things remain.

The law was given to call these things out and to fix them. You don't have to be unholy. You don't have to be profane.

You don't have to be murderer of father, murderer of mother, manslayers. You don't have to be fornicator. You don't have to be a liar.

You don't have to be someone who gives false testimony and false witness in public. You don't have to be a sodomite. This is scriptural proof that you're not born that way.

It isn't something you can't help. There is power in the word of God. There is power in the law to call out sodomy for what it is and to fix it.

All of these can be remedied. Was David the king a manslayer? Was he an adulterer? Yes. Is he named as the father of the Lord Jesus Christ? Yes.

Jesus, son of David. How did that happen? His manslaying and his adultery were remedied, forgiven, cleansed. His heart was purified.

His spirit was renewed and restored. David made a lot of mistakes, but there is grace greater than all our sin. But it is brokered.

It is delivered in and through the word of God in the hands of God's Holy Spirit and in no other way. Love alone doesn't do it. Love has tools.

I can want something to be mowed, but I can't just walk out there and say, Pastor, be thou mowed. I love you, Pastor. I love how you look when you're mowed.

Loving a mowed pastor doesn't make the pastor mowed. But I need tools. The tool that perpetrates and implements the power of God to remedy sin and to create a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith is God's word.

And you understand that. That's why you're here. That's why we are here.

We know the role of the word of God, and it has to be rightly divided. You cannot be a workman that isn't ashamed unless you rightly divide the word of truth. It doesn't say a workman needs not to be ashamed because he just loves everybody.

This misapplication, misunderstanding of love is fatal to Christian faith. And isn't it something that love, which is the goal, love which originated our salvation, and love which is expressed as a result of our salvation, can be perverted and distorted using teachers of the law who don't understand it, and who distort and pervert it, and make love into something it's not, and deceive many. It's horrific.

We are not deceived. Be not deceived. Let no man deceive you over and over again.

Well, it is the word of God that illuminates and enlightens and helps us to understand, and in so doing, gives us the power to express genuine love, to have that pure heart, that good conscience, and that genuine, bite-it-and-it-doesn't-dent faith. That's why we're a Bible church. That's why we individually go to the scriptures.

God is at work to will and to do His good purpose among those who are recognizing where the power comes from. That should be us. Close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for this wonderful passage in Your Word that reminds us of the foundation, the rock on which our house is built, that sustains it, that preserves it through every storm, every wind that blows. We pray that as we reflect on these things, that God the Holy Spirit will bring to our minds the truths that are sourced in Your Word, and produce in us and spread abroad in our hearts that love that partakes of Your power, Your character, Your justice and righteousness that reflects good conscience and sincere faith. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.