

1Tim 23-09-10b

Let's continue our study now in 1st Timothy. We have just the closing three verses of chapter one to look at. The preceding section we have seen in great detail and that's pretty much our last pass through it.

This charge that Paul is talking about, which he introduced in verse three, I charge you with dealing with false doctrine, that which divides and does not comport with sound doctrine, those individuals who are creating division and so on, that has all been addressed. And the indirect encouragement and exhortation to Timothy by Paul's own example, Timothy might think, well, I'm not adequate to the task. In another place, Paul will say, let no one despise your youth.

But Paul says there is no excuse for not succeeding in our charge, in what has been entrusted to us. It is the theme of the hymn that we remember, a charge to keep, I have. It's not the battery song, it is the exhortation, it is the trust that God commits to each and every one of us.

And we think, well, I'm not qualified, I have a past, I have a record of failures. Paul says, you're not getting away with that lame excuse. If you want to see a past full of failure and outright egregious awfulness, look at me, he says.

I persecuted, I was a blasphemer, I was insolent, but the grace of God came because the Lord Jesus knew that I could be faithful and that I did these things out of a misunderstanding. I did not know the truth. Once the truth was presented, Paul latched onto it and just caught fire and became the foremost of the apostles.

So in verse 18, this charge, Timothy, I commit to you, my son, this charge, I commit to you, son, Timothy. This is no accident. He's, of course, not literally Paul's son, he is his son in the faith, but the father-son notion, the paradigm in Israel, especially, is that the son is going to be like the father.

Jesus Christ, the son of God, says, if you've seen me, you've seen the father. And the implication here is that after Paul has described his past and what grace and faithfulness have done in his life, he says, Timothy, you are my son. You can do what I have done.

You can avail yourself of the grace, the power of God in the same way that I have. So this charge, I commit to you, son, Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. There are people who want to say that there's no such thing as good warfare.

You can debate that in the sphere of national and international relationships on this planet, but we are engaged in a spiritual conflict. The full armor of God theme is related to this truth. So, it is a warfare.

What do we know about warfare? Those who have been involved in it know that it consists of threat, it is dire threat, it is or can be scary, it can induce fear, it calls upon your commitment to do what you are told to do at risk of your health and well-being, there are casualties in the military in warfare, there is an enemy in warfare and it is important to be able to discern that enemy whether they are on the outside wearing a different uniform or they are on the inside as insidious betrayers and traitors and those who work from within in an espionage fashion. Warfare is one of the most vivid images you can call up and Paul uses it here. I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you.

What do we know about prophecy? This was a New Testament gift that filled in until that which is complete could come, which is the completed written scriptures. So what the prophecies did for Timothy, scripture now does. We are those, at least I am certainly one who believes that the gift of prophecy has largely ceased.

God can do whatever he wants to. If he wants somebody to prophesy, I am sure they can do it. He's not going to come down and ask me if I think prophecy is ceased and then not sponsor it.

But generally speaking, our understanding is that what the role of prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues and the other sign communication gifts in the early church have been superseded and those faded away when scripture became available. So if this recognition that Timothy has a gift of pastoring and teaching and communicating God's truth was recognized by prophecy in his day, this is something we can discern by scripture today. Once again, the power of God, the guidance of God, the illumination of our path, what should we do? What education should we pursue? What opportunities should we exploit will be revealed to us by the spirit of God through the word of God.

The solution to our problems, the means of our guidance, the source of our strength is all this foundation of sound doctrine in and by and through the power of the Holy Spirit active in our souls. This is the answer. And if we have problems in any area, we're not real sure if God wants us to go down a certain road, pursue an opportunity that opens up.

What is our resort? We no longer have to wait for the elders of the church to come and lay on hands and prophesy. How did that prophecy work by the way? These prophecies that identified Timothy and had them lay hands on him, how did those people know to lay hands on him? Where did they get their guidance? Holy Spirit, revelation of truth and the power of the Holy Spirit, revealing that Timothy is the guy. Now we have the same Holy Spirit and we have the scriptures and by soaking ourselves in them, by cultivating the influence of those two things, we will know what our path is, where are our opportunities.

Our spiritual gift may be a gift or may not have a name. I think many times spiritual gifts

are tailored for specific situations. There are unique circumstances and God fits one or more believers to meet that need and undertake that task and fulfill that mission for his glory.

And it may not have a name, doesn't need to have a name. It is our assignment. I have had at least two jobs where I had to write my own job description.

The position did not exist. The organization was new and well, what responsibilities, what duties, what purview, what sort of functions ought to come under this job? And I had to just make it up. I had to look around and see what was the need and well, this particular job that I hold should do these things, but we need somebody else to do other things.

There are things that are and are not a part of my task, my responsibility and to define it. And it didn't even have a name. I had to invent a name for it.

I think spiritual gifts can be that way as well. And we don't have to say, well, do I have the gifts of helps? Do I have the gift of teaching? Do I have the gift of pastor? Do I have the gift of... There are functions that have no name, but God has uniquely gifted and uniquely positioned and uniquely empowered you and me for our assignment. Doesn't have to have a name, but we do have to know that it is our assignment.

And how do we know what that assignment entails? It is the word of God. God, the Holy Spirit will bring passages to our attention and they will resonate and they will strike home and we will know. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth and it's experiential truth as well as doctrinal truth and theological truth and practical truth.

The Holy Spirit is the agency by which it becomes meaningful to us. So this charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to these prophecies, and you wage the good warfare, not a bad warfare, not a conflict within, not strife and dissension in the ranks. The enemy is out there, we are in here and we are united against a common enemy, an enemy that is inspired and led ultimately by Satan himself.

Verse 19, having what? Faith and a good conscience. Faith and a good conscience. This harks back and sums up everything we saw in the first part of the chapter.

Sound doctrine, that's what faith is in. And a good conscience is right in the center of a pure heart and an unhypocritical faith. Good heart, a conscience, a moral sense, and an unhypocritical faith.

That unhypocritical faith is the faith that Paul is talking about here. And it's like the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love in isolation, they are very limited. When we have all three of them, it's much more stable and much more fruitful.

Faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected. This some goes all the way back to verse three, charge some, there are some, and we have to know who the some

is. These who are teaching another doctrine, some having rejected faith and a good conscience concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.

If you look at this verse and just kind of reflect on it, what does it tell us? Some having rejected faith and a good conscience. There was faith and there was a good conscience and it has been pushed aside. It has been turned away.

It was there, it was present. I read something has to be present to be rejected. You can't reject.

When I was a kid, there were door-to-door salesmen that would come by selling Hoover vacuum cleaners or fuller brushes or encyclopedias, and they would just go door-to-door. This is back in the days of rotary dial telephones and such. Well, you can't reject the fuller brush man unless he's at the door.

You can't reject something unless it is present. So faith and a good conscience were present, were available. These some, these men looked at them and said, no, that's not the faith I want.

That's not the kind of moral standard I am going to follow. I have a different moral standard. What is your moral standard? This is what you say righteousness is.

So let's look around today. There's a lot of people with problems. I had the privilege of tuning a piano for a man who had been in construction, but he got tangled up with a construction injury and then got addicted to painkillers.

And that addiction consumed him and wrecked him and destroyed him. But he found the Lord Jesus Christ and recovered. And now he has a ministry to the homeless, to those who are entangled in addiction.

And he has so much enthusiasm. I could hardly get the piano tuned because he feels about what he's doing, the way I feel about studying and teaching the word of God. You get me on that subject and that conversation is going to be long and enthusiastic.

And that's how he is. But the moral standard is for some believers, well, what's right is to go out and force people to listen to a sermon and then we'll help them. We'll go to the mission and we'll have the soup kitchen and we'll label out meals and we'll provide shelter.

But that's not right to do unless we run them through the chapel and they're going to get a 20 minute sermon, then they can have their food. And that is their conscience. That's their standard of right.

It's not right to help these people unless we make them listen to something purporting to be the word of God first. Other people say we should be charitable indiscriminately. It

doesn't matter if we're actually sponsoring and being sort of complicit with someone's addiction.

The money we give them, the support they give them, they just turn right around and abuse it and further their wrongness. And that's their conscience. Their moral standard is I help people, I don't care what they do.

Guy out the window with a cardboard sign, 20 bucks every time. I don't know what he's doing with it and I don't care. Charity for its own sake is a good thing.

That's my conscience. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. The approach that this gentleman has, I really appreciate because he is very clear that the reason he is anxious to help and to enter into the lives of people that are struggling with homelessness and addiction is he has been there himself and Jesus Christ rescued him and saved him and gave him the power to escape that inescapable otherwise situation.

He doesn't ask them to convert. He doesn't force them to listen to a sermon, but he makes it very clear that every help that he offers them, every hour that he invests in their lives, he is doing because of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And it is an expression of the love of God and his love because of Christ that he does what he does.

And I think that's a great approach. It requires nothing of the beneficiary, but it also doesn't mask or hide the fact that this help is coming because of the Lord Jesus Christ from God himself. That's the reason it is offered.

And at some point, if you will respond and enter into life in Christ, you will have access to that same power and that same love and that same forgiveness and cleansing and repurposing of life. It is an opportunity, not turning someone away if they're not ready for that yet, but if someone absolutely rejects it, if they reject faith and a good conscience, and they say that BS is not for me, that religion stuff, no way, no how, no where, no when, have to move on to those who do not reject faith and a good conscience, can't help everyone, have to work on those who are receptive. This is true in almost any field, whether it's evangelism or within the family of believers or wherever it may be.

Faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck. The first thing that happens is they were sailing, they were in a ship, they were on a sea, and they were afloat, they were heading for a destination, but it's like they threw the compass overboard and ignored the glass that shows the falling barometric pressure that precedes a storm. They threw all that overboard, and now they have run into the rocks and shoals.

They've hit the reef, they've cratered the ship. They didn't start out that way, they were in the ship. They started out with faith and a good conscience, but they threw it

overboard, they've rejected it.

And that caused shipwreck. And now Paul gets specific, and this is so interesting. He doesn't deal in generalities, this is specific.

These two individuals, Hymenaeus and Alexander, are these rejecters of faith and a good conscience. They have suffered shipwreck. And Paul says, I have delivered them to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Wow. Turned them over to Satan. This is not the only time that Paul uses this figure.

The similar statement, we can go first to 2 Timothy 2, verse 17, because Hymenaeus shows up again. Go a few pages forward to 2 Timothy 2, 17. Paul is, once again, most of us have memorized 2 Timothy 2, 15, be diligent, study to show yourself, present yourself, approve to God a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, sound doctrine, the foundation, the ground and pillar.

Shun profane and idle babblings. Same thing Paul tells Timothy in his first letter. They will increase to more ungodliness and their message will spread like cancer.

Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth. Notice their problem is not a lack of love, it's not a lack of sympathy, it's straying concerning the truth. And what do they specifically say? They say that the resurrection is already passed and they overthrow the faith of some.

I have covered progressive Christianity and the deconstruct, reconstruct movement in some detail. So I'm not going to revisit that except to say, if you're interested, look up, you can search on this on the internet and you'll find a bunch of things on progressivechristianity.org. What do the progressive Christians, the deconstruct, reconstruct crowd, which are growing exponentially and are influential in seminaries, in denominations, in individual churches, large and small. What do they think about resurrection? The error of Hymenaeus specifically is he's strayed from the truth regarding resurrection.

This is the kingdom now crowd and Jesus is the king. We are kingdom people doing kingdom work and we're serving the king and honoring the king and so on. More on that momentarily, because Paul in our context is going to talk about the king, but because they believe the kingdom is now, because they believe that we are kingdom people and we should be fulfilling the kingdom promises now, guess what these folks think about the resurrection? There is no afterlife for them.

It is all now. And you think, well, but surely they've read Paul saying, if we have hope in this life, only we are of all men most miserable. Eastern mysticism and notions of reincarnation and your consciousness flowing out into the great collective this is what they believe.

I am not kidding you. These people call themselves Christians, but they have erred, they have strayed and they are teaching heretical ideas about the resurrection. Progressive Christianity does not believe in a literal physical resurrection.

It's shocking, but of course they don't lead with that. If you have Jews or Mormons come to your door, they're not gonna lead with their strange cultish beliefs. They're gonna talk about Jesus and things that they think we all have in common.

And it's not until you are sucked into the watchtower or you move into the Latter-day Saint era that you find out the squirrely things that basically define their cult. Same with Progressive Christianity. They lead with love, they lead with helping the oppressed and not being judgmental and inclusivity.

But if you read them closely, they believe in universal salvation. And we'll talk about that because the verse to which they appeal is in 2 Timothy. God, who is the savior of all men.

That's the one they put on their banner. They wave it like a flag, wear it like a crown. God is the savior of all men.

All means all. There's a cartoonist called the Naked Pastor. I see his things come up every once in a while.

And he's got a cartoon of Jesus on the cross from behind. And it's one of these sort of crude cartoons on purpose. You know, it's very simple, very two-dimensional.

But there's a vast swath of people out there. And from behind Jesus on the cross, you can see a little bit of the crown of thorns. And it says, all means all.

And that guy, if you look him up, he's a universalist. He believes everybody is saved. There's just people that it's taking a while to bring them around.

And that resurrection is coming to realize the life in God that is possible. Now, it is a twisty mashup perversion of some genuinely great truths of scripture. But if you press them, if you look at the articles, progressive Christianity does not believe in a literal physical resurrection at all.

They don't believe in the afterlife as we understand it. They don't believe in heaven. They don't believe in the lake of fire.

And so they have to abstractify. They have to generalize and mysticize. They are mystical.

A lot of them believe in reincarnation, some. More believe in just sort of, I know there's some sort of spiritual afterlife, but it's unknowable. The things in scripture are just metaphors to wake you up and bring you to life now.

And the resurrection is when you realize who you are in Christ and so on. Well, that is not a new heresy. That is the heresy of Hymenaeus, who has strayed from the truth.

How? Saying that the resurrection is already passed. That's what progressive Christianity says. If you're awake and you're pursuing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and you're endeavoring to fulfill the beatitudes and love one another and love your enemies, do good to those that hate you, and campaign for social justice and all of the things that they hold up as primary, it's not about faith and it's not about truth.

It's about social justice. And they say the resurrection is already passed. If you're woke, for them, woke, they embrace it.

Woke is a good term. Read their articles about wokeness. They love being woke.

It's their term. I am woke. I am sensitive.

I am inclusive. I embrace everyone. I don't consign anybody to the lake of fire.

Parentheses, sorry, you are not the judge at the great white throne. You don't get to decide whether people go to the lake of fire or not. And to think that you are is making yourself God, which is exactly what they're doing.

They have pushed God out of the way, and it is the unholy trinity of me, myself, and I. They do not believe in Satan as a personality. He's just a metaphor for bad things. And they don't believe in the afterlife in any biblical sense.

They believe that if you're awake and aware and interested in Christ at all, you're resurrected. The resurrection is already passed. This is not a small, flaky, fringe, isolated corner in some bent part of Christianity.

This is rapidly becoming mainstream. Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people attend churches that teach this and preach it. Many more follow the influencers, quote unquote, on the internet that purvey this false doctrine.

I am telling you about it because that is what Paul told Timothy to do. Call out the false teaching, name it for what it is. And if you've got to name names, name them.

Among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, Paul says, that they may learn not to blaspheme. So how successful was this turning over to Satan? Whatever that may be, did it work? The order in which we are going to study the past oral epistles is 1st Timothy, Titus, and then 2nd Timothy, because that is the order in which they were written. 2nd Timothy is several years after 1st Timothy.

In 1st Timothy, Paul turns Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan, that they may learn. But when you get to 2nd Timothy, which is Paul's last letter before he's executed, Hymenaeus is still at it. His name, Hymenaeus, if you trace it out in Greek, is a tribute to

the God of marriage, the Greek God of marriage.

So evidently he's a Gentile, doesn't appear to be a proselyte or certainly not Jewish, but his parents named him Hymenaeus because they thought, well, marriage is an end in itself. Sort of metaphorically speaking. But notice, even being turned over to Satan doesn't change Hymenaeus' mind.

This is scary. There's nothing you can throw at this guy to change his mind. What application do we draw from this? If you find someone who is intransigent, who rejects faith and a good conscience, and has no interest, they are not seeking, they are not asking, they are not knocking.

When Paul says, I have turned them over to Satan, this isn't Paul going to Satan and knocking on the door of the lake of hell's realms and saying, Satan, I've got a couple of Christians here, I want you to persecute and I want you to hurt them so bad that they'll come back into the fold. Some people think this is what being turned over to Satan means. What do we know about Satan? He roams the earth like a lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Satan asked for Simon Peter that he might sift him like wheat. The Lord Jesus said, I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. Peter has faith.

That faith, if he works it, if he sustains it, is going to protect him from Satan. And Satan will not sift him like wheat. That your faith will not fail.

I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. To turn someone over to Satan is to let go. Inside the fellowship, inside the ecclesia, inside the unity of the faith and the bond of peace sustained and empowered by God's Holy Spirit, there are many things we can do to encourage, to speak the truth in love, to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.

But Paul says, when I turn these two guys over to Satan, they are excluded. This is disfellowshipping. Paul says they are no longer in the fellowship.

Whatever is outside the fellowship, who is the God of this world? Who is the king of this world? It is Satan. And outside the bubble of blessing, outside God's protection and provision, outside of the hedge that God puts around his vineyard, that's Satan's realm. He can roam the earth looking for someone who is not protected, who is not under God's care.

Satan could not attack Job until God voluntarily lifted the protection around Job so that Satan could go after him. But it was only to the limits that God allowed. And it ultimately resulted in that hedge being restored.

And within that hedge, Job has the double portion blessings. And God works that

suffering together for good. God never left Job, but God allowed Job to do battle with the satanic attack that he experienced to demonstrate the strength of Job's faith.

In all that happened to him, Job did not curse God. Job did not blaspheme. Like Peter that Jesus is praying, his faith did not fail.

Did he have questions? Did he suffer? Did he get discouraged? Absolutely. But his faith never failed. I know that my Redeemer lives and I will see him from my flesh.

Skin worms may eat me, but I will stand and see my Redeemer on that last day. Job's faith in the resurrection never wavered. To turn these men over to Satan basically means to turn them out into Satan's kingdom.

You're not gonna get the blessing by association. You're not gonna get the prayers and the encouragements and the rebuke and correction and instruction in righteousness that comes in the fellowship. I'm cutting you loose.

You're on your own. And hopefully being out in Satan's world without what you are wrongfully sucking out of the church by way of provision and influence and so on, by being out there on your own, hopefully you will learn not to blaspheme. It's the same thing that Paul says to the Corinthians about the man who is living with his stepmother.

And Paul says, I'm not present, but I have judged in absentia. And I am turning this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. What does that mean? Not that he's gonna suddenly be eaten with leprosy or parts falling off of him.

What is the destruction of the flesh? That's Sarks. Remember the extended discussion Paul has about the flesh and the spirit in Romans. There's the fleshly man and there's the spiritual man.

The destruction of the flesh is if his fleshly desires are causing him to cross this line and engage in this relationship, we're gonna put him outside the fellowship and let that take its course out in Satan's world. He will learn not to indulge the lust of the flesh. We can't help him with positive encouragement, with fellowship, with truth.

Like Hymenaeus and Alexander, he seems to have rejected a good conscience and rejected the faith. Maybe he will respond when he is out there floating alone in the world. So this is a necessary detethering, disfellowshipping.

There is such a thing as letting someone go. John the apostle talks about this. They went out from us, but they were not of us.

And they're gone. They are no longer a part of us, these teachers of false truth, these believers of fables and false stories. They have constructed a reality for themselves that doesn't match God's, and they have rejected a good conscience and they've rejected

faith.

Let them go. I turn them over to Satan. You like Satan's way, you live in Satan's world.

We're no longer going to extend the benefits of fellowship and the positive expressions of truth and love that exist within the ecclesia, within the body. You're circumcised, you are cut off, you're out there. You're in the darkness, which is outside.

Hopefully a little bit of weeping and wailing and gnashing your teeth will motivate you to come back. But it did not work for Hymenaeus. And if living entirely in Satan's realm doesn't change your mind, you are not amenable to change.

You're not going to repent. That is the worst, that is the fullest expression of how bad it is to be separated from God, to not have share in the life of God, to not be in Christ and be a new creation. If that doesn't turn you, if you're happy there, if you like that, no argument, Jesus Christ himself could appear to you in person and you won't change.

Even the demons believe and tremble in the existence of God, but they don't repent, they don't follow him, they don't avail themselves of whatever grace is or was available to the angels who sinned the sin of the high hand, the same sin of Satan with the five I wills. The model that we see throughout scripture is God always offers a way back. If we fail, if we stray, look at Paul himself, that's what he gives us in chapter one.

Look how bad I was, but I took the way of faith when it was offered to me. I accepted the truth when it was explained to me. I did what I did in ignorance and unbelief, but the Lord Jesus knew that I could be faithful.

Those who had no interest in being faithful, if God is gonna disfellowship them, if the apostle Paul is gonna disfellowship them, what should we do? If there is anything that will turn them, this is the last resort. If you can't love them into the right way, maybe Satan can misery them into the right way. Many of us felt the misery of life apart from God and that misery drove us to the foot of the cross.

Some people, no matter how miserable they get, just outright can't stand the thought of looking to God for salvation, believing there even is a God who would hold them accountable for right and wrong. Rejecting a good conscience. I don't like God's moral standards.

If you don't like God's moral standards, you can never accept his son. You can never live a Christian life if you reject a good conscience. Conscience is the moral standards of right and wrong.

No, I'm gonna define those for myself. Eating animals, bad. Eating lettuce, good.

Helping the poor, good. Believing the Bible, bad. Do no harm, good.

Suiting up in a uniform, bad. Calling out sexual sins and perverse lifestyles, that's bad. Nobody should ever call somebody out for who they love.

And accepting them and embracing them and celebrating them and supporting them, good. This is the conscience of the world. This is a conscience that is not God's conscience and it is not good.

And people that embrace it and accept it and reject a good conscience, in many cases, there is no help. The only last resort is cut them loose. They float in the sewer of the kingdom of Satan.

And will that possibly bring them to a realization of the problem and the error? Sometimes it does. Most times it does not. And you have Hymenaeus as the example.

Interestingly, in the man who was having relations with his stepmother in 2 Corinthians, Paul says, apparently that had an effect and he encourages them to accept this guy back in. So sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But it's no longer up to me.

There's nothing else I can say, nothing else I can do, no amount of love I can express. It's gonna have to be some other source, something out in the world that brings that conviction and that motivation. That's what it means to turn them over to Satan.

To learn not to blaspheme or for the destruction of those perverse desires that are being gratified by going that way. Well, that brings us to the end of chapter one. I have threatened for two weeks to get into chapter two, but we will actually do it next Sunday.

But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for your grace in sending God the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sin, of your righteousness, and of the impending judgment that there is a future, there is a resurrection, there is a future eternal life in the kingdom of the son followed by your own kingdom. We're grateful for the grace that has entered us as citizens into your future kingdom, giving us the opportunity to be residents of the new Jerusalem, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ during the time of his own kingdom and to enter into the blessings and opportunities of yours.

And we pray that as we reflect on that wonderful hope, that it will motivate us to faith and produce love in our lives, that finds the targets at which you want it to be aimed, that as a result, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ is central, his person and work are the issue, and we represent him fully as his body on this earth until that day that he comes to take us to himself and present us before your throne. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.