

1Tim 23-09-17a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a privilege for us to be here and to gather in the sight of the Lord for fellowship. We're continuing our study in 1 Timothy chapter 2 this morning.

We have one final thing to say about the last verse of chapter 1. It's quite a sobering thing to be turned over to Satan, delivered to Satan, and we've seen the primary idea there of being placed outside the fellowship, outside the wall of fire. Paul alludes to the work of Satan and being in Satan's power more than once. We'll take a quick look at these parallel passages, and then we'll dive in to the exhortation to supplications and prayers in chapter 2, verse 1. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and we'll begin.

Father, how grateful we are for another opportunity to spend this time together, to be encouraged and built up, to have the ministry of your Spirit to unite us and to remind us of who we are in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for him, for his love and grace as an expression of your own in coming and delivering us from our sinful and fallen natures, our shortcomings, our inadequacies, and granting to us righteousness and peace and sanctification in him. We pray that as we look together at this portion of your Word, that the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts and souls, that we can be washed by the cleansing water of the Word, we can be renewed in our minds, and we can move together toward that culminating day when the Lord Jesus comes to take us to himself and present us before your throne.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

As I said, this notion of being turned over to Satan is quite a bit of a—it has been a conundrum, something that people have wrestled over, because you would expect instruction in the church or learning in the church to not really involve the devil. And he's not, you know, there's not a sign down the hallway in the Sunday School building that says, "This is Satan's class. You can learn not to blaspheme in here."

And yet this is what Paul seems to say: "I have delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan in order that they may learn not to blaspheme." And there is a lot you can say about this. One of the primary places to see a parallel is in the second letter to Timothy.

We looked at this a little bit last time, but turn with me real quickly to 2 Timothy chapter 2. There is another reference to Hymenaeus here, and it partakes of the same theme that we saw in chapter 1 of 1 Timothy. So in chapter 2, when Paul says, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You must endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ," he describes this warfare and this athletic struggle, this *agonizomai*, compares it to a hardworking farmer in verse 6, and asks in a way in verse 7 that the Lord will give Timothy understanding in these things. And he then focuses on the resurrection.

You remember that the problem with Hymenaeus is that he is teaching that the resurrection is already past. And we looked at that a bit last time. This is something that has crept back into the present day. It's kingdom now. All of the heavenly promises, all of the future kingdom rewards and opportunities, you basically have to find them in this life. And then you're going to kind of leave your body and go to some unknown spiritual future that is really not worth talking about. Everything is in the present.

It is shocking to realize how many people who claim to be Christians are walking down this road and are at various stages of the progressive Christian disbelief in a literal, physical resurrection. They say, "Well, if you've come to Christ and you're interested in the things of God, that was your resurrection. Your resurrection is past."

But the resurrection is central in Paul's theology and in his teaching. And you find it here in verse 11 of this chapter. "This is a faithful saying: If we died with him, we shall also live with him."

And then you get down to verse 14, and this contains one of our very well-known memory verses: "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord"—just as Paul charges Timothy to oppose those who are teaching bad truth, bad doctrine, bad theological understandings—and to encourage people to not listen to them. Charge them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit. This wrangling about, what does this word in a passage actually mean? Does all mean all? You can wrangle about sovereignty. You can wrangle about opportunity. You can wrangle about universality. You can wrangle about all kinds of things.

And conceptual truth is important and needs to be defended. And Paul tells Timothy in both of these letters and Titus that it is important to teach truth and combat falsehood, combat departures and straying from the truth from these who have made shipwreck of their own faith and are busy trying to lead others into the rocks and shoals. But striving about words to no profit, just endless debates and trying to score points and trying to find a way to achieve a victory in an argument—notice that the result of this is the ruin of the hearers: shipwreck, straying, no longer focused on the things that are important.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing”—what?—“the word of truth.” It’s such a familiar verse. We sometimes forget that the emphasis here is a worker who is unashamed. This is where the Baptist and others get Awana, “a workman not ashamed.” But the proper understanding and the fruitful work that is done is centered on the word of truth.

“Shun profane and idle babblings. They increase to more ungodliness. Their message spreads like cancer.” Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort. That word “some” that we saw in 1 Timothy chapter 1: “Charge some that they teach no other gospel,” who have strayed concerning what? The truth.

The reason I’m pointing this out and emphasizing it is there are other bellwethers. There are other telltales. There are other issues that the church today considers to be of utmost importance: acceptance, toleration, love. And in the name of acceptance and toleration and love, all of which are good things, churches collectively and believers individually are doing it at the expense of the word of truth.

It’s a wonderful thing to be tolerant. We all have to bear with one another. We sin. We inflict hurt and harm and injustice on one another. We go to God and confess it. We try to recover and do better, but not at the expense of the word of truth. And to say people who are living a perverse lifestyle are acceptable, people who embrace understandings of the word of God that are what Paul calls another gospel—if it’s legalism, if it is acceptance at any cost, “I will accept you no matter what. Come in. There can be a needle hanging out of your arm. You can bring your same-gender partner. Come on in. We’ll take you no matter what because Jesus accepted all who came to him, so we will do the same.”—and no standards, no hewing to the word of truth.

Watch for the word of truth in this passage. We are to rightly divide the word of truth if we are going to be workers that are not ashamed, that we be not ashamed at his coming. There are things that we can accept. There are things that we can embrace. There are things that we can endure and tolerate. And there are others that we cannot. Talking about what does the word of God teach? Rightly dividing the word of truth. Profane and idle babblings increase to more ungodliness, so shun them. What is the fruit and what is the result? You will know them by their fruit.

Their message spreads like cancer. This is what is happening around us today. I have looked at the available teaching that will stream. You can find whole channels from denominations and church groups and things that you can add to your Roku menu, that you can find a channel on YouTube or on the other streaming services. And they have series that go through books. They have topical studies. They have current-event application of the word of God and so on, whether it’s prophecy or it’s politics or it’s social issues.

And it just reminds me of these squares that you see that have a talking head like you’re looking at right now. And then you put four of them on the screen, and then 12 of them on the screen, and then 24 of them on the screen. And as you pile them up more and more and more, and there’s just all of this talk, all of this talk, all of this talk. And there are myriads, there are thousands of voices speaking. And it’s very difficult to discriminate and discern. And you have to take your time and listen. And one thing sounds good, but you listen to the next thing and, holy smokes, this person is way out in the weeds.

And it is the word of truth. This is our first recourse. This is where we go to make sure that what we listen to, what we heed, and what we shun matches the word of God. And when we look at the word, we have the Holy Spirit first. The Holy Spirit is our guide. Jesus didn’t say, “He will lead you into all love. He will lead you into full acceptance. He will lead you into an embrace of everything in the world.” He will lead you into the truth. It is the truth. Rightly divide the word of truth. Their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have done what? Have they strayed concerning love? Have they strayed concerning acceptance? Have they strayed concerning social issues? Have they strayed concerning politics? They have strayed concerning the truth.

That is the source. That is the only thing that has the power to change us on the inside. I will present to you a startling fact. The Holy Spirit by himself cannot change our hearts. He is there from the moment of salvation. He never leaves us. But how many believers have made shipwreck of their faith, have strayed concerning the truth? Can the Holy Spirit just change that heart? He can't. We have to have both the Spirit and the truth. And it is the truth that the Holy Spirit uses to change our heart.

Those concepts, those precepts, those propositional facts are what the Holy Spirit uses. And both of them together have the power to change us. The truth by itself—people who have knowledge that puffs up, they can know the Scriptures back and forth. If the Holy Spirit is not there to use it, to swing that hammer, to plant that pick into the hard soil of our soul and pry and break up the rocks and churn up the soil and plow us so that the word of truth can sink in and bear its fruit—it takes both. One without the other cannot change us. You can memorize the entire Bible and it doesn't change our heart. You can have the Holy Spirit in all of His fullness, but without the word of truth, without a right understanding, He is not able to change our hearts.

People pray and say, “Oh Spirit, change me, guide me, lead me.” If you don't understand how He does it, He can't do it. Because we have to voluntarily, on purpose, imbibe God's truth. If you want to do it, just circle it every time it comes up in this passage: rightly dividing the word of truth. Hymenaeus and Philetus have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past.

And what happens when you stray concerning the truth? What happens when you don't rightly divide the word of truth? They overthrow the faith of some. Wrong doctrine can overthrow your faith. Bad teaching, a faulty understanding, perverting, corrupting, distorting, changing, even just by emphasis—the word of God will overthrow faith. It'll overthrow our own faith. And by spreading this kind of thing, spreading like cancer, it can overthrow the faith of others.

Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: the solid foundation of God. What did we see in 1 Timothy chapter 3 when we went there, looking at the house of God? What is it that is a pillar and ground in the house of God, how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God? It is the truth. It is the pillar and ground of the truth.

So when you look at chapter 2 here, this foundation stands firm. “The Lord knows those who are his.” This is the seal on the foundation. It is not the foundation. It is the seal on the foundation: “The Lord knows those who are his.” And if you go back to Numbers, where this quote comes from, it is in the context of opposition and people trying to lead the Israelites astray. And God says, “Moses, you come before the people. These others come before the people. The Lord is going to show those who are his. They will approach and come near.” So this is the concept in verse 19.

And if you want the passage, it is Numbers chapter 16, verse 5. This is Korah. Remember the Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebellion in Numbers chapter 16. So Moses says, “Tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who is his and who is holy and will cause him to come near to him. The one whom he chooses, he will cause to come near to him.”

This is not an inscrutable, baseless, sovereign choice. Why does God choose Moses? As it says in another place, Moses was faithful in all his house. Moses was faithful. God—he wasn't without errors, kills the taskmaster, tries to come back to Egypt without circumcising his son—but like David, even with his egregious failures, he repents, he returns, he is faithful. And that is the basis upon which God can choose us, choose us for bearing fruit, choose us for works of service, choose us to fulfill opportunities and potentials.

There is a basis for God's quote-unquote sovereign choice. God is sovereign, but his sovereignty is not random. It's not inscrutable. It's not unknowable. God sovereignly chooses to honor faith and to recognize obedience. God is not unrighteous to forget. I quote this in almost every Bible class: our work of faith, he doesn't forget. And it is the basis for his choice to bless us, to provide for us, to involve us in the forward progress of his plan and purpose.

So the Lord knows those who are his. And that's, again, from Numbers 16, verse 5. And the emphasis on that is God is going to let the congregation know who is fulfilling his will. Because God is going to bring Moses near, and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram are not going to be brought near. They have quite a different fate. And the purpose of this reminder from Paul, back to 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 19, is, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

We have an obligation, if we name the name of Christ, to identify iniquity and separate from it. If there is perversity, if there is disobedience, if there is this straying concerning the truth, teaching another gospel, teaching a different standard, it's not a good conscience, it's not an unhyprocritical faith, we are to separate, depart from iniquity. We depart from it personally in our own lives and we disassociate from others who refuse to depart from iniquity.

And this gets back to the end of chapter 1 in 1 Timothy, when Paul says, "I have turned Hymenaeus and Alexander, I have delivered them to Satan." They have departed from the truth. Paul goes on in our parallel here in 2 Timothy chapter 2 to talk about a great house. There are vessels of gold and silver, also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. The wood and clay vessels, these were the chamber pots, shall we say.

And if anyone cleanses himself from dishonor—remember when Paul talks about the treasure of the gospel and the treasure of Church Age truth, of which he has been made a trustee, a minister, a steward, and he says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The contents are what count. But these vessels for common use are full of refuse. And Paul says, "If anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful for the master, prepared for every good work."

That's why it is so important to know the truth, to adhere to the truth, to not stray from the truth, to oppose those who try to substitute something else for the truth, those who stray concerning the truth, because it is the pillar and ground that is the foundation that has God's seal. We will be approved and need not to be ashamed.

"Flee youthful desires." Why is it called a youthful desire? The older we get, the more we look at our previous life when we were in our teenage years, perhaps, and we look at others who are now in their teenage years or even in their early twenties, and we say, "You know, your impulses, your desires, you don't have the benefit of experience and the school of hard knocks to rein in your desires and not be led by them, not be fooled by them, not be led into things that have long-term consequences, because all you're listening to is the desire and not practical truth, common sense, sobriety, self-control." And to allow desire to lead is like turning loose of the reins and letting the horse go his own way.

He sees something in the road and he leaves the road. He startles, he's hungry, he wants to go back to the barn. I got scraped off a horse on this property one time because I jumped up and wanted to ride her, and she decided she didn't want to be ridden, and she didn't want to go where I wanted to go. She wanted to go back to the barn because that's where she got fed, and she just turned around and trotted under a tree and scraped me off like a bad movie.

Youthful lusts. Flee also. So those who have strayed concerning the truth are to be shunned, in verse 16, and we are also to flee desires. And many times the two go hand in hand. The false teaching will succeed in leading people astray because it appeals to something in our nature. It's a desire that's not well-informed, that isn't guided by structure and purpose and understanding and experience, and those who do these profane and idle babblings hook into something in our nature. We like it. It's appealing.

In many cases, youths like to be accepted in a group, and we saw this in the early chapters of Proverbs. Don't go along with these violent youths who say, "Come with us, and we're going to go for blood. We're going to lie in wait. We're going to enrich ourselves. We're going to have a good time." It is the young man who is hearing the appeal of the crafty harlot: "Come with me down this dark road to my sensual abode where we can have all kinds of stimulation and fun."

So this idea to shun that which is not truth and flee desires that these false appeals prey on and take advantage of. Nobody wants to be ill thought of. Nobody wants to be out and associated with things. We would love to be fully accepted and appreciated in the world. Christians say we're getting a bad reputation because we don't accept people of other faiths. We say that Buddhists and Muslims and people in India and so on aren't going to heaven, and Jesus is the only way. People don't like that.

If we can say, "Well, there are many roads to God, and there's one God, and there's many paths, and let's just all embrace and be accepting and don't say that, well, if you don't believe in Jesus Christ, you're going to the lake of fire," it's harsh, and it causes people to look at us askance. And our youthful desire is to be one of the group, to be hail fellow well met, to be in the mix and in the crowd, and nobody's looking at us and saying, "Hey, what are you doing here?" Flee that and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

How? Righteousness and faith. Notice the two that lead. Righteousness comes by faith, faith in the truth. Righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Righteousness and faith are the means. Love and peace are the result. There is a progression here with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and this has to be our standard.

We are not always going to be able to express love, and we are not always going to have peace with those who do not call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Remember the pure heart, the good conscience, and the unhyprocritical faith in 1 Timothy 1. A pure heart is important. We're not born with it, and we often sully it. We corrupt it. We defile it. We pollute it. We sin. We fail, and yet we are to call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Where does a pure heart come from? We have seen it. God is the one who cleanses. God is the one who purifies. You know Psalm 51.

With those—and notice there—we have to cling to others who understand these truths, who rightly divide the word of truth, who are workmen who need not to be ashamed, who aren't engaged in profane and idle babblings that increase to ungodliness. We flee these desires, and we pursue as a group, together, as a team, as a family, as a unified body, righteousness and faith first and foremost, because you can't do the last two without the first two. Righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Notice, call on the Lord. “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” That's naming his name. But if you want to move down the road in righteousness, faith, love, and peace, we have to do more than simply name the name. We call on the Lord out of a pure heart. What do we call that activity? Prayer. Where is Paul going in 1 Timothy chapter 2? Prayer. Prayers, intercessions, supplications. Calling on the Lord has to be done out of a pure heart.

“Avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” Foolish and ignorant disputes. This idea of ignorant is uninstructed. People do silly things because they don't know better. If you've ever seen someone get out of their car and start toward their garage or toward their front door, and all of a sudden the car starts rolling back down the driveway because they didn't put it in park, they didn't set the parking brake, they've got a steep driveway, and it's just silly. Why would you not be situationally aware and ensure that?

But you see this on the funny video show where somebody's car gets away from them and they're running down the road trying to hop back into the—or they leave it in drive and the engine running. They get out because they want to pick something up and their car just starts idling away from them, and they're frantically running, trying to get the door open, trying to hop back inside and stop the car. That would be uninstructed. You should really know better, but you're not using the knowledge that is available. You're not even drawing on your own experience. Most people that have an episode like that are real careful afterward. We all learn from our mistakes and we are aware, well, let's not do that again.

I know people that have been in their garage, had their driver's door open, and they needed to back out and they forgot to shut their driver's door, and it catches on the side of the garage and just folds the thing toward the front. You only ever do that once. After that, you are so aware of your garage, or you're parked in front of your garage door and you're wanting to back out, but you're talking on the phone or thinking about a text you just got or whatever, and you slip it into drive. And instead of going backward, you go forward and your door is no more.

This is the sort of silly—it's uninstructed in the sense that you're not availing yourself of just common-sense knowledge, things that you would know, should know, and would put into practice if you just were stopping and thinking. That's what he's talking about here when it says, “Reject foolish and you ought to know better controversies.” You just ought to know not to go down that road. And all of us do it to our chagrin.

Reject foolish and ignorant controversies because you know they breed fights. They breed fights. That's what this literally says. They just generate fights. And a servant of the Lord must not fight. It says quarrel, but this is the verb associated with the noun that we just saw. They're cognate. They're from the same root. Avoid disputes because you know. It says ignorant disputes because you know better. So it's not really an ignorant dispute, is it? It's not ignorant if you know better. And you know, if I do stupid things and I know better, that is totally on me.

So, a servant of the Lord must not quarrel. This word servant is so interesting. This is the word *doulos*, and it is sometimes translated slave or bond slave. Other times, it is translated servant. But it's not the case that this is a free individual serving another individual. The NET Bible, the New English Translation Bible that has so many wonderful text notes, and it has a good note on this. I want to read it to you.

Traditionally, servant or bond servant is the translation of *doulos*. Though *doulos* is normally translated servant, as here, the word does not bear the connotation of a free individual serving another. Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker note that servant for slave is largely confined to biblical translation and early American times. In normal usage, back in the present when Paul wrote, the two words were carefully distinguished. Servant and slave are two different things. The most accurate translation is bond servant in that it often indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another. But it's archaic and not many people understand what it really means.

The background for the concept of being the Lord's servant, a servant of the Lord—remember so many times Paul opens his letters this way: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,” a slave of Jesus Christ. And you say, “Well, this, he's just an abject bond slave doing everything the Lord tells him like a slave for a master.” But I like this further comment in the NET Bible note. Being the Lord's slave or servant, this context changes the inherent understanding of *doulos*. If you just see *doulos* by itself, it can mean kind of an abject slave, one who has sold himself into service and is no longer his own master. He's not captain of his ship or whatever. But the Lord's servant changes it. And the reason is because of the Old Testament.

For a Jew, the concept of being the Lord's servant did not connote drudgery, but honor and privilege. Think about that: the Lord's servant. This is an honor and a privilege. And I think that's why Paul begins most of his letters with that self-identification.

National Israel in Isaiah 43:10, God says, “You are my witnesses and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me, there was no God formed, nor shall there be after me.” You are my witnesses and my servant, God says to the nation of Israel. This is not a bad thing. This is not a hardship. This is not grinding disrespect and low station. You are my servant. I have chosen you so that you can know and believe me. That's knowledge of the truth.

You look at Moses in Joshua 14:7. Joshua says, “I was 40 years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land.” Moses, the servant of the Lord, that is an honorific. This is like saying Paul the apostle or Isaiah the prophet. This is not a demeaning, degrading title: Moses, the servant of the Lord, Joshua 14:7.

David, Psalm 89:3: “I have made a covenant,” God says, “with my chosen.” This is God speaking. Psalm 89:3: “I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn to my servant David.” 2 Samuel 7:5: “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build a house for me to dwell in?’” Remember David's great idea to build the temple? Go and tell my servant David. This is how God addresses him.

Same thing, a few verses later in 2 Samuel 7:8: “Now therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to become ruler over my people, over Israel.’” My servant David.

Elijah, 2 Kings 10:10: “Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab. For the Lord has done what he spoke by his servant Elijah.” All of these men were servants of God.

And look at what Paul says to Timothy here: “A servant of the Lord must not quarrel, must not fight, but do what? Be gentle to all, able to teach, patient in humility, correcting those who are in opposition.” Not in arrogance, not in supercilious, look-down-the-nose, insulting and degrading tones. Be gentle in humility, correcting those who are in opposition. If God perhaps will grant them repentance, why? So that they may know the truth. It is the truth that can change their minds.

If they receive gentle and humble correction, if the Holy Spirit can use that truth, they can repent so that they may know the truth. This is with a view toward our favorite word, *eis*, E-I-S: into, unto, with a view toward. God will grant them repentance with a view toward knowing the truth and that they may come to their senses. This is just the sensible, proper approach, not being led by youthful lust, not straying and making shipwreck of your faith.

And notice, this is what we'll see when we come back from the break: come to their senses and escape what? The snare of the devil. Escape the snare of the devil. How did Hymenaeus get into the snare of the devil? He was delivered to him so that he could learn not to blaspheme. Can he get out of that snare? Yes, he can. And Paul just gave the means. Very interesting.

Paul has a couple of other comments to make about Satan and his role in the life of believers, and we'll see those when we come back from the break.