

1Tim 23-11-19a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 19th of November 2023. We're continuing our study in 1st Timothy.

We have some interesting concomitant and associated information to look at today. And as we do so, we'll be even in the Old Testament briefly. So with that in mind, let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and we'll begin.

Father, it is so wonderful to remember that we are sustained by your grace. We are held in your hands. We are lifted up in the Lord Jesus Christ, made acceptable in your sight through him, given so many opportunities and potentials and privileges.

We are so grateful for him as our Savior, as the head of all things to us, his body. And we pray this morning, as we look at the scriptures together, that your Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts, help us to recognize how important they are to conditioning our thinking and establishing the foundation for our goals and our values and priorities so that we can redeem the time and invest both in time and in eternity and in all things. Remember the Lord Jesus Christ and reflect your glory.

We pray it in Jesus name. Amen. Well, there's some background that I want to point out here.

First of all, briefly in terms of current events, as we see the situation continuing to unfold in the Middle East. I mentioned to Patty and Elizabeth yesterday that it is an interesting exercise and I encourage you to do the same if you will turn back to the book of Amos for a brief scripture reading this morning. Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, right here in chapter one.

These are the words of Amos who was among the sheep breeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. As you know, I am far from being a date setter or a tin foil hat wearer or a harbinger of cutting holes in sheets and standing outside and jumping, trying to make the rapture happen. There is perhaps some significance to the introduction to Amos, which I will leave you to scratch your head over here.

But two years before the earthquake, then in verse two, Amos says, the Lord roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem. The pastures of the shepherds mourn and the top of Carmel withers. Thus says the Lord for three transgressions of Damascus and for four, I will not turn away its punishment because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron, but I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.

I will also break the gate bar of Damascus and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Awain and the one who holds the scepter from Beit Eden. The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir, says the Lord. We don't have time to look again at this.

We studied it during our kings and prophets review, but then in verse six, thus says the Lord for three transgressions of Gaza and for four, I will not turn away its punishment because they took captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom. But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, which shall devour its palaces. I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod and the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon.

I will turn my hand against Ekron and the remnants of the Palestinians shall perish, says the Lord God. Philistines, Palestinians, it's the identical same word, Peleshti in Hebrew. You can look, the five cities of the Philistines, one of them is located in the modern Gaza Strip and that is Gaza itself.

The other four are north and very slightly east. And Ashkelon is still a city today. You see its modern name sometimes spelled with a Q instead of K. Other times it is a K. And Ekron and Ashdod are largely archaeological tells at this point, their original locations.

But you can look at these, and of course you have Gath is the fifth city. But you can look at the modern location and status of these cities. But it is not without interest that Gaza is singled out first and foremost among the five cities and designated for fiery judgment from God.

By no means am I saying that what is currently happening in Gaza or the Gaza Strip is in any way a fulfillment of this prophecy. It is just interesting to note that this area has historically been opposed to the people of Israel going back to the days of the judges, to the days of the conquest, to the days of the early monarchy. And we see the continuation of this conflict in much the same way that we see the continuation of the conflict between the people of God in general and those who oppose them.

In the age of Israel, it was an earthly people and they had earthly opponents. In the age of the church, we are in many ways a heavenly people. It does not mean we are not involved on the earth.

But our citizenship is not in the land of Israel. It is not to the east of the Mediterranean Sea and in the vicinity of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee and so on, the Shephelah and whether it is the Galilee or Judea. This is a physical region and Israel historically has been promised citizenship and habitation in that area.

Our citizenship is in heaven. And in many ways, our conflict is a spiritual conflict. But as we see adumbrations and echoes, both prophetic and retrospective, of conflict in and around Israel, it is the earthly picture of a heavenly conflict.

And there are many now who are so focused on the conflict in the Middle East or the

conflicts in Ukraine or conflicts in politics, economic disagreements and outcomes. I do or don't like this or that policy about spending or borders or social issues, whatever it may be. If nothing else, this is a reminder to us that as goes Israel in the Old Testament, so goes the believer in the New Testament.

And we step up and we transition, we widen our gaze, we expand our horizons vertically and remember that what goes on on the earth is a reflection and in some ways a mirror of the importance of our spiritual battle. The flesh and blood enemies certainly exist, but that's not where we wage our war. We wrestle not against flesh and blood.

You say, well, I feel like I'm wrestling against flesh and blood every day. The focus here, the emphasis is this is not the definition of our lives. This is not and should not be the focus of our entire attention.

We certainly pay attention. We have an obligation as did the Old Testament Israelites to the widow and the orphan, to those in our periphery that we can bless as God gives us means motive and opportunity. But our primary definition, we are heavenly citizens.

And what we do here is as sojourners and strangers and pilgrims. It doesn't mean that we don't take an interest. The Samaritan was not a native of the road that he walked to Jericho when he saw the man lying in the ditch and he still helped him.

And Jesus uses that as an example of watching out for, looking out for, and identifying who qualifies as a neighbor. And that is very much the case for us. And the idea that we should be so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good has no support in the word of God.

But at the same time, we can't be so earthly minded that we are no heavenly good and that we lose sight of the source of our power, our definition, our function as representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the man from heaven, who represented God, the father, and who accomplished the will of God who sits on the heavenly throne. And Jesus was not defined by social issues. He didn't primarily come to this earth so that he could grapple with Romans or religious leaders.

He came bearing a heavenly message. And that message was delivered first to the house of Israel and ultimately transforms and is enhanced and exponentially so by the gospel for this age. That's something we're going to look at this morning as we return now to our study, our passage in 1st Timothy chapter 2. And we're in this section, verses 8 through 15, that begins with prayer and continues as it assigns the function of prayer to men.

It's going to go on to talk about women. And this is a subject of great controversy, as they like to say in England, debate. There are sides taken and views expressed and opinions held dearly and tightly about whether these words pertain throughout the

church age or were they culturally conditioned or are they even valid? Are they even really from the apostle Paul? And that's why we have, before we continue to complete this section, we've looked at the idea of prayer in the preceding section, and it is going to be reintroduced here in verse 8. I desire therefore that men pray everywhere.

And this harks back to what we saw in verses 1 through 4. I desire supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks first of all be made for all men. We saw this repetition of the word all. I exhort first of all, these prayers made for all men, all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness and reverence.

And notice this idea of looking at both the earthly and the heavenly from the same perspective. So leading a peaceable and quiet life, quiet and peaceable is his order, that's earthly. Quiet and peaceable, this is without disputation, without generating and participating in controversy and acrimony and conflict and confrontation, going out and getting in other people's faces with our perspective and our point of view and what we believe to be true.

We are enjoined, we are exhorted, not only to enjoy personally the peace that Jesus leaves with us and the peace that he gives to us, not as the world gives, it is a supernatural peace. It is part of the triad that begins the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace. Irene is the Greek word, E-I-R-E-N-E, and we get the modern English word something that is irenic.

It's an irenic view, an irenic scene, an irenic situation. The girl's name Irene comes from this. If you want to name a girl Hope or name a girl Joy, you could name her Irene, and that's the other part.

So, peace, leading a quiet and peaceable life, that's the earthly component. And as we examine ourselves, are we constantly getting in arguments? Are we carping and critical and a source of conflict and a source of disunity and a taking away the peace of other people without good cause? There is a time to correct. There is a time to rebuke.

There is a time to exhort. But if the pattern is one of carping and hostility, that is not the Christian life. When we are remembered at our memorial service, that grouching, critical, couldn't do anything to please them, constantly finding fault, nitpick here, pick a nit there.

All I remember is never pleased, never happy, never content. There's always something wrong. There's always something that could have been done better or something that wasn't planned or thought out well.

What an awful memorial. It's a scary thought for those of us who have a weakness in the area of thinking we know how things ought to be, that that would be the prominent feature for which you are remembered. And people at a memorial service want to try to

step around your bad faults.

And so what's left? Hmm, can I think of anything else? So, the quiet and peaceable life, that's the earthly realm. But notice what follows in all godliness and reverence. That's the spiritual component.

That's the vertical side. That's the heavenly citizenship that should be founded and supported in a quiet and peaceable life. But a quiet and peaceable life alone is not godliness and reverence.

These are the vertical that should actually support that horizontal when you think of the cross as a metaphor. This quiet, peaceable life, horizontally, godliness and reverence in the vertical is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. And accomplishing those, pursuing those, fulfilling and embodying those qualities in the horizontal and in the spiritual, in the earthly and mundane and physical, and in the heavenly and ephemeral and transcendent, this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

And it is used by God to help accomplish, he weaves it into his desire that all men be saved, a, that the life in God, the life in Christ that we represent as his body be attractive enough to draw others to the cross, to draw others to God the Father. Jesus talks about both of those. If I be lifted up, parentheses on the cross, I will draw.

And that example of self-sacrifice, that example of agape love expressed in action that is sacrificial to self and beneficial to others ought to so characterize us that those who observe our lives, especially observing them up close, are drawn through us to our example, our Savior. God our Savior desires all men to be saved. And this is an avenue of drawing and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

After salvation, you cannot know the truth, you can't come to that knowledge without regeneration, without the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit, without the ability to not be living the life of the and looking at the notion of truth and goodness with human eyes, but to understand truth and godliness from the divine perspective. And our lives are to be a means by which men are saved and do come to a knowledge of the truth. So we may look at our daily life and think, well, I'm not a world-renowned evangelist, I'm not a great preacher, I'm not involved in any meaningful formal ministry, I'm just puttering around here doing the daily tasks that require doing.

I have a limited scope, I have a limited visibility, nobody knows really if I'm having a good day or a bad day, it doesn't matter. What I do, what I think, what I say doesn't matter because my points of contact are so small. I'm just a tiny little grain of salt.

God's going to use the big chunks of salt and I'm on the sidelines, I'm in the background, I'm not engaged, I'm not on the forefront, not at all. Because God desires all men to be saved. We can ask ourselves this question, wouldn't it be wonderful if, like the great

evangelists of the past, Dwight Moody or Billy Graham or others you could name, Billy Sunday and others, thousands are made aware of the gospel, thousands come to Christ, how wonderful, how many stars will they have in their crown and so on.

Well, think about the lesser light evangelist. Suppose someone had a ministry and in their entire lifetime maybe 500 to 1,000 people got saved. Was that a ministry worth having? 500 people, 1,000 people, would you get the training or get the experience, make the journeys, make the sacrifices so that 500 to 1,000 people could be saved? Well, suppose you're even smaller than that.

You think about the dusty days on the prairie where people were few and far between. What if a guy was an evangelist and there were just 50 in his entire lifetime, but 50 people came to Christ directly because of that individual's evangelistic ministry. Would it be worth it? Would he consider it worth it? Because I was here on the earth, 50 people came to a knowledge of Christ and have eternal life.

Well, you see where I'm going with this. How about 10? How about 5? How about 1? Would it be worth it to you if God was able to use you so that just one other person came to faith and a knowledge of Jesus Christ and eternal life and the glory and the benefits that pertain thereunto? And who knows what God might do through that one person? I've told you the story many times of Reverend John Hicks, who on his deathbed had seen so little fruit from his ministry that he was depressed and discouraged. And he said, my life as an evangelist has been almost entirely wasted.

God didn't seem to bless it. Nobody knows who I am. He had one friend sitting at his deathbed.

But John Hicks had held a revival out in West Texas, and W.A. Criswell heard him preach the gospel and came to faith at the age of 10. And look at the ministry Dr. Criswell has had, both in evangelism and in giving his congregation knowledge of the truth. God has seen fit to preserve over 4,100 of his sermons, and a goodly chunk of those are the great doctrines of the Bible.

He taught systematic theology to his congregation, eschatology, pneumatology, homardiology, Christology, prosukology, his view of the doctrine of prayer, and so on. And who does that? But he did it, and those sermons go out to 1,500 people a day even now. And it could be argued that we have W.A. Criswell because we have John Hicks.

And John Hicks was faithful in the small things, not even knowing how God would use him. And he has the privilege at the resurrection of entering into all of the wonderful things that God did in and through Dr. Criswell, and those who have been influenced by Dr. Criswell, led to Christ by Dr. Criswell, gone to the Criswell College and become pastors and teachers themselves. And that ministry has exponentially multiplied across the years and the decades from those early starts.

So it is God's will that all men are saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. And we are implicated and we are woven into that purpose by pursuing a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. It doesn't say all peace and all quiet because we can't always achieve peace and quiet, but we can pursue all godliness and all reverence.

So this is what is good and acceptable. Well done thou good and faithful servant. Wouldn't it be wonderful to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, have our life come up for review, and the Lord Jesus looks at it and says, this is good.

This is acceptable. My Father approves of this. Well, that is the goal.

And he goes on to say that the Lord Jesus is central. There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. God in one place, man in another.

What is central? The man, the mediator, Christ Jesus, who partakes of both natures and bridges the gap. And it is in Christ that we find the power to accomplish this wonderful potential, this great opportunity, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. And the idea of the Lord Jesus Christ as ransom is nascent and incipient in Old Testament prophecy.

It is briefly alluded to in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. But that mystery is revealed by the Apostle Paul, not even in the preaching of Peter. You read Acts chapter two and Acts chapter three and the early preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem.

There is not a focus and an emphasis on substitutionary atonement. What is the message of Peter? Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins. You crucified Jesus.

God has honored him by raising him from the dead. But Peter does not preach atonement. Peter does not preach fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices.

That is going to come later. Peter says, God has made him both Lord and Christ. Therefore repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins, the sin of killing an innocent man, the sins that you've committed in religious legalism and superficial and hypocritical religious practice.

We'll see this more in a moment. For which I was appointed, verse seven, a preacher and an Apostle. I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying.

A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. We are the Gentiles. Paul is the teacher that reveals these mysteries by divine appointment, both preacher and Apostle.

He gives three different functions here in verse six and seven, seven, especially preacher, Apostle and teacher. Preacher, this issues the call. This is the broadcast advertisement of the potential and the possibility.

Apostle is the authority. He is one sent by God himself. He emphasizes that at the beginning of many of his letters and a teacher.

This is where we come to knowledge of the truth, teacher of the Gentiles in faith, in the sphere of faith, these things can be learned. Truth is the content. Then he starts in verse eight.

I desire therefore, well, Paul is now going to implement his apostolic authority, his preaching call, his teaching content of the truth. But I want to pause here and focus on something that is often overlooked. And that is the notion that there are two different kinds of Christianity, because there are in fact two different kinds of gospel represented in the New Testament scriptures.

I will give you, and if you ever want to review this so that you don't have to take copious notes, there's a great summary of this, and I'm just going to use this summary. There's a few points I would add and subtract, but this is close enough. This is at gotquestions.org and it is under the title, Pauline Christianity.

This is not Pauline like a girl. This is related to Paul. And I'm just going to cover this.

It's succinct. It's to the point. Pauline Christianity is a term applied to what some perceive as the religious teaching unique to Paul's writings and distinct from the gospel of Jesus.

Now, right away, our little alarm flags pop up. The little bell starts to sound. We say, wait a minute, you're going to divide between Jesus and Paul.

Actually, it is important to distinguish those two presentations, those two types of teaching. Why would that be? Well, let's work backwards. To whom is Paul explicitly sent? Who's his explicitly identified divinely mandated audience? To whom is Paul sent? He is the apostle to the Gentiles.

We have just had it here. I am appointed a preacher and apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Now, to whom was Jesus sent? Jesus himself identifies his target audience.

And when a Gentile woman comes up to him pleading for grace and healing, what does Jesus say? I am sent only to whom? The lost sheep of the house of Israel. That is a very important phrase to slow down and take a look at word by word. Lost sheep.

Well, what about goats? Is Jesus sent to the goats? Is Jesus sent to wild sheep, wild rams? These are sheep that belong to Israel. Sheep of the house of Israel. They are already God's sheep.

They are already in Israel, but they are lost. The wonderful hymn, we love to hear Ernie

Ford sing it, the ninety and nine that safely lay in the shelter of the fold. But one was lost on the hills far away, far off from the gates of gold, away on the mountain, wild and bare, etc.

That sheep belongs in the fold. It is owned. It is enjoying the same status of relationship to the shepherd and to the owner as the other ninety nine.

It's a lost sheep. It doesn't need to be converted. It needs to be brought back to where it came from.

Brought back, restored, right? I am sent, Jesus says, only exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now, does Jesus go ahead and perform this healing miracle for Syrophoenician woman? The discussion that he has about the children who aren't eating the bread and if crumbs fall and the dogs can eat them, isn't that fair? And Jesus says, great is your faith. And it happens.

And this is an anticipation that this gospel is going to be rejected by Israel. This opportunity is going to be rejected. The kingdom is going to be set aside and God is going to expand and extend his plan and purpose into a whole new dispensation, a whole new opportunity with a new message.

And it is a new message. It is not to be found in the teaching of Jesus except in incipient and nascent form. It is not to be found in the prophets except in vague anticipation.

A light will shine to the nations through Abraham. All nations of the earth will be blessed. But what is the nature of that blessing? What is the extent of the blessing? What is the definition of the blessing? It is unknown.

It is what some perceive as the religious teaching unique to Paul's writings distinct from the gospel of Jesus. This is a fair distinction. That's my suggestion to you.

It's fair because it has two different purposes. Jesus with John the Baptist, his precursor, I will send you Elijah the prophet. Elijah ministers to Israel, right? He will call the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the sons to the fathers.

That's the families in Israel. These are Israelites descended from Abraham in Israel. And John comes, make the way of the Lord straight.

The way of the Lord is the way into Israel, the way to come in and fulfill the promises, the way to come into the temple and restore the glory that left in Ezekiel's vision, right? It's all about Israel. The valleys that will be filled in and the mountains that will be laid low, these are in Israel. This is not the mountains of the world.

This is not the valleys in Africa. It's Israel. The glory of the Lord returns to Jerusalem, not Rome or anywhere else.

So it is distinct. That is Jesus taught one thing and Paul taught something completely different. Now, completely different, I would footnote or caveat or object to if left to itself.

They are not completely different. They have a different emphasis. They have a different audience.

But they have one source. They have one theme. There is one goal and objective.

But they are different. They're not completely different. They have many great points of unity, but they are different, not completely different.

Those who believe in a separate Pauline Christianity believe that the Christianity of today has little to do with Jesus' teachings. Rather, it is the product of Paul's corruption of those teachings. Well, this ignores the commonality of the revelation of Jesus Christ in Old Testament Scripture.

As he tells the two on the road to Emmaus, he opened to them the scriptures and showed them all things concerning himself. Another one of those alls. It is there.

It is incipient and it is nascent. And for Israel, it is explicit, the suffering servant and so on. There is the bruising for our iniquities and wounded for our transgressions.

By his stripes, we are healed. The elements of substitutionary atonement are there, but they are not fulsomely revealed. They are not explicitly investigated, as will happen in the Pauline epistles.

And they are not universally applied. When it says he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities or vice versa, who is the us and our? Israel. Israel is all that is in view in Isaiah's description.

So, Christianity today is thought to be the product of Paul's corruption of these teachings. Well, what are those differences? And is this a fair criticism? Should we get back to the Sermon on the Mount? Should we get back to the Sermon on the Plain? Should we get back to the point of the parables? We will see this when we come back from the break.