

1Tim 24-06-05a

Greetings, welcome to the 5th of June, Wednesday night, Bible class here in the year of our Lord 2024. We're moving forward right now. We're doing right foot, left foot through Timothy on Wednesdays and Sundays.

I'll eventually switch back to Proverbs, but we have some momentum that I want to maintain because these are the latter days and this is guidance for the latter days. And it seems pretty important for us to have it well in mind. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study.

We'll begin. Father, thank you for another opportunity to be built up and edified and encouraged by spending time together, looking at the truth of your word, receiving the ministry of your Holy Spirit to bless these truths to our hearts in a way that is meaningful and leads us, guides us and energizes us to represent your son, the Lord Jesus on this earth. We pray that the things we look at tonight will further that goal and accomplish that purpose, that we will be conscious of who we are and why we're here every waking moment of the day.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen. Our passage, I'm going to read all the way down to where we're going to pick up tonight.

The spirit expressly says in latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies and hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. Our discernment, whether it's in relationships with other people or our own habits, and that's what these two things represent, are guided by believing and knowing the truth. We will not be deceived.

We will not be misled in the area of relationships or personal conduct if we believe and know the truth. Every creation of God is good. Nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.

We can be thankful because we know the foundation on which our behavior, our priorities, our goals, our values, our decisions, our words, our actions rest. And we can be thankful that God gives us opportunities to express both our restraint and our freedom properly, being sensitive to the conscience of others, being sensitive to our opportunity to shine a light that can be a beacon to bring others to relationship with God through Christ. These things are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, healthy conversation that we have on a daily basis with our Heavenly Father.

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully

followed. We have the words and we keep them. This is John 14.

You remember the Lord Jesus reminding us in John 14.23, if you have these words and keep them, my Father will love that one. We will come to him and make our abode with him. John 14.23 reflects this very same truth.

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him. We will come to him and make our home with him.

Verse 24 of that same chapter, he who does not love me does not keep my words. And the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. The word we get from the Apostle Paul, the mysteries that he reveals are not his, they come from the Lord Jesus, who in turn received them from the Father.

That is the chain of custody from the Father to the Son, to the Apostle Paul, to the pages of Scripture, to our hearts, ministered by the Holy Spirit. We can speak the truth to each other in love. Some of us have that as a function and an assignment, but all of us receive these words.

And it is this good doctrine, these words of faith, which we are nourished in, built up. It's our meal. It's our spiritual strength.

And we've got to visit it on a daily basis to be strong, to not be misled, to not get lazy, to not be apathetic, to not be unable to fulfill our calling, because it is a high calling of God in Christ Jesus, can't be done in human strength. But verse 7, reject profane and old wives' fables and exercise yourself toward godliness. We saw that Paul had to strain.

He had to endeavor to maintain a good conscience. I strive to maintain a good conscience. We strive.

This is the works part. This is the doer of the word part of our Christian life. We hear it.

We believe it. We have the ongoing presence and power of the Holy Spirit to live in its light, but we have to exert some effort. We've got to take some responsibility to avail ourselves of all of this wonderful divine provision.

So we reject profane. This means it comes from a non-divine source. There is the divine and there is the profane.

We talk about profanity, but profane in the theological sense means it isn't originating in heaven. It isn't originating with God. So these stories, these narratives that appeal to the flesh, they sound good.

They incorporate elements of truth, but it's an admixture. And because it is adulterated, because it is mixed, those truths are no longer true. You think about things that are mixed.

If you are going to bake, I think all of us, even guys who used to cook for ourselves have had this experience. You go to the cupboard and you get some flour or you get some cornmeal mix to make cornbread or something. I did this one time in Okinawa.

I told you this story a long time ago. I'm going to tell it again because it's a powerful illustration in my own mind. But I wanted to have some breakfast and I had a box of raisin bran in my cupboard in my B.O.Q. room, my un-air-conditioned B.O.Q. room in Okinawa, Japan at Camp Foster.

And it was a Saturday. We'd been in the field for three or four days. I thought there's nothing going to be better than a big bowl of raisin bran, ice cold milk.

So I went to the cupboard, got my box of raisin bran. This box was nearly full and I was planning, I got a soup bowl. I was going to make myself a double hepping all at once.

I opened the carefully folded and sealed box top, unraveled the wax paper, looked inside and it was crawling with ants. It was a brand new box but they had, I found, they had chewed a hole through the wax paper at the bottom and were all over it. And I could see a trail of ants back and going into the cupboard and into the cinder block wall.

Well, imagine my disappointment. I did not want to go all the way to the commissary to get something else to eat. There wasn't anything else to eat.

And people generally would not partake of that because it is raisin bran with an admixture of live crawling ants. Those of you who remember that story know how my breakfast went from that point. But think about things that are food but you look and there's mold or there's a mouse dropping or worse.

There's a roach. There's, there's a bug. There's, there's mealworms in your food.

Well, however much wonderful stuff is in there, an admixture of that which is not food and not good puts you off the whole thing, right? How much profanity, how much profane adulteration does it take to taint, tarnish, corrupt, and pervert God's truth? People can claim that Jesus is the son of God. They can claim that he came and was kind and was forgiving and was merciful to the poor. He accepted prostitutes and tax collectors and ate meals with them.

But if you take those truths and mix them with something that says Jesus was indiscriminate, he had no conditions on his love and his acceptance. He would eat with anyone. He would accept anyone.

He, and he has no part of the, the idea that there is a God of judgment. You don't see that in the suffering servant phase of his career. Therefore, there is no God of judgment.

He's not going to bring consequences and penalties for sin. Penalties are built in. When

you indulge in sin, you make your own misery.

The consequences from being out of line with God's plan are just sort of built in. God does not actively judge. God is just waiting to love you back into his presence and enfold you with his love.

And, and if you choose to go a different way, he's just going to let you create your own misery until you realize that you've got to return to him. But he is not a God of judgment. Jesus isn't going to come back on a horse.

He's not going to judge the nations. He's not going to rule in the millennial kingdom with a rod of iron and shatter the recalcitrant like potter's vessels. That's not the Jesus of the Bible.

That's not the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, don't worry about that. Come as you are.

There's no need to identify, acknowledge, confess, or turn away from sin in your life or an evil pattern or a perverse lifestyle. There's no need for that. Jesus accepts you.

God accepts you. And the people of Jesus and the people of God should accept you as well with no repentance, no change of mind away from dead works or faith toward God. Just come.

God loves you. God wants a close personal. Now, I, I sort of leaned on, on the people who talk about a close personal relationship.

As you well know, there is such a thing as a genuine, deep, abiding, intimate, personal relationship with God through Christ. But it isn't automatic. It isn't God just leaning forward on his throne, waiting to scoop you up and give you a big sloppy kiss and a hug.

What did we just see in John 14 and its parallels? If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. How does this process of love from the father begin? Not the generalized love for the world that sent Christ as savior to be the savior of all men potentially, and especially and fruitfully the savior of those who believe. As we saw last time, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my father will parenthetically then love him.

We start by appreciating the son, loving the son and loving him enough to have his words and keep them. And having his words and keeping them is an expression of our love for Christ, our appreciation for him, our respect and admiration for him. The father loves those who love Christ.

My father will love him, the one who loves me and keeps my word. We will come to him and make our home with him. Is this an unconditional promise or a conditional promise? Is the father and the son going to come and have an abode with us just because we're in

the family? It is predicated upon, it is conditioned upon loving the Lord Jesus and loving him enough to find his words, learn his words and live in the light of those words.

That is why we spent several weeks looking at every single imperative that the Lord Jesus gave that is recorded in the words. And guess what else does not happen? My father does not love him and he does not come along with me and we do not make our abode with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words and everything else I just said does not happen.

It is so important to understand this. Here's a verse for you. Write this down.

John 8 51. In context, Jesus is speaking to the religious leadership, the Pharisees and the scribes and the chief priests and the elders, and they are not accepting the words of the Lord Jesus. They will not even have his words, much less keep them.

And Jesus says, if you were Abraham's children, as they claim, we have Abraham as our father. Jesus said, this is up in verse 39. If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.

Metaphorically speaking, we are sons of how we act and whose example we emulate. If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God.

Once again, chain of custody of this truth. Truth is sourced in God the father. The father sent the son.

He is the truth, but he comes from the father and we come to the father through him. The path is truth in both directions. This is sanctification by the word of God coming to us and prayer returning to God.

You seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father, your father, the devil.

Elaine Pagel, who I've mentioned earlier, has a book about revelation. It's called Revelations and then has a long subtitle. She has another book called The Origin of Satan.

And it is her contention that Satan is a concoction of the human mind to explain bad things that happen. He's not an actual entity. He's not a personality.

He's not the Satan of the Bible. If you consider that proposition, you have a choice. You can believe Elaine Pagel and those who are of her persuasion, or you can believe the Lord Jesus Christ, who spoke of encountering Satan, being tested by Satan, said, get thee behind me, Satan.

Satan roams the earth like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him

steadfast in the faith. The words of the Apostle Paul about Satan, the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, represent Satan as an actual personality, a genuine entity.

By the way, he is not omnipresent and he is not omniscient. So people who want to say, the devil's after me, have to consider themselves to be pretty important. I think he probably commutes between Washington, D.C. and some of the capitals of Europe, and perhaps Asia and the Middle East.

But I seriously doubt, I think there's a 19th level bureaucrat demon who may be watching what you and I do and sending reports up the chain if we rise to a level of pertinence. But there are general policies that cover faithful believers. For Satan to pay particular attention to us, we would have to be in a pivotal position.

Jesus said in John 8, 42, if God were your father, you would love me. Think about that. If God were your father, you would love me.

The one who has my words and keeps them, he's the one who loves me. So if we don't have his words as believers, and we don't keep them, in what sense is God our father? This is sort of like paternity on paper. Someone can be the biological father, but if he's not in the picture, he's not a functional father.

Right? In the same way, if we do not love the Lord Jesus, expressed in having his words and keeping them, God the father is our father on paper, but he is not functionally, effectively, and spiritually acting as our father. His role in our lives as heavenly father is contingent upon our choices. How active and functional was the father of the prodigal when he was off spending his inheritance in riotous living and buying shallow friends who disappeared when he ran out of money and he ended up at the trough.

He had a father, but there's no functional benefit. There's no interaction. There's no relationship.

He said, I've got to go to my father. Even his servants live better than I'm living right now. And if I go to my father, I can expect, even if he only treats me as a servant, I'm going to be way better off than I am.

And of course, when he returned, the father gave him the full blessings of sonship because of his repentance. But during the time that he voluntarily separated himself from the household, there is no actual father benefit. And that's what Jesus is talking about.

If God were your father, you would love me for I proceeded forth and came from God. I've not come of myself. He sent me.

Why do you not understand my speech, my teaching? Because you are not able to listen to my word. You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father, you want to

do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.

When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources for he is a liar and the father of it. The spirit expressly says in the latter times, some will depart from the faith and some will remain in the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits, doctrines of demons, those who speak lies in hypocrisy. What is the source of those lies? God is truth.

The devil is falsehood. He does not stand in the truth. There is no truth in him.

When he, Satan, speaks a lie, he speaks from his own for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convicts me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God hears God's words, heeds God's words, listens to God's words.

We like to tell ourselves, well, but I'm a faithful believer. Look at all my time spent in Bible study. And that can be true.

It is true for many of us. I would say for probably everybody listening to the sound of my voice, we have all spent a lot of time listening to the word of God. We love it.

That's why we're here tonight. We want to learn it. We want it to make a difference in our lives.

But remember the warning. If anyone thinks that he stands, let him take heed lest he falls. If we become complacent, if we decide we've got enough momentum and we can just kind of coast, that is the quickest path to a fall.

And it is so urgent in these latter times that we be constantly soaked in truth so that we can identify the lie. Past record of accomplishment is wonderful, but it can't sustain us in the present. The present requires vigilance, watch and pray.

Constantly cleanse our hearts so that it is pure. Constantly work the word of God through our conscience so that it is good. Constantly focus on the word of God so that it is the object of an unhypocritical faith, pure heart, good conscience, sincere faith, genuine faith, real ongoing, get it done faith day by day by day.

We have these Fitbits and smart watches that measure our activity during the day. How many steps do you get? Minimum of 6,000 steps. If you can get 10,000 steps, you're burning energy and keeping yourself in shape.

And it's a wonderful thing. You think about the steps that you take through an airport, through a shopping mall, up and down the driveway to get the mail at a distance. And think about the steps that you've already taken.

You can take 999 steps and they're all good. But if that 1,000th step, you catch your toe

on something and trip and you stumble and fall and break a wrist or turn an ankle or knock your shoulder out a joint, you can't say, but look at those 999 steps I took. They were great.

Look at all of the calories I burned. Look at the muscle tone I developed. Look at the cardiovascular benefit that I got.

If you trip on the 1,000th step and get injured, now that is what looms large. When you go to the hospital to get a bone set or your shoulder put back in place or your turned ankle splinted and packed with ice, they're not going to say, well, tell me about the 999 steps you took that were all good. They want to know, how did you do this? Did you step on something that was uneven? How did this happen, this accident? It is a dangerous thing.

It is convenient and it's a part of our human nature to lean on what we have done right. But I've done so well for so long with so much. It only takes one bad decision, one moment of inattention, one failure to apply the truth and avoid being deceived.

You can have 10,000 good credit card transactions, but if you go to one faulty vendor, one deceitful hacker on the web and give them your credit card, your card can be charged thousands of dollars. I had somebody, I don't even know how they got my credit card number, but they charged \$3,600 worth of gas somewhere in Central Texas. Thankfully, if you have a good quality card, they have fraud prevention and they knew that, how could I be using my card in and around Plano and suddenly I'm in Central Texas spending \$3,600 on fuel.

But they called a check and said, is this you? I said, absolutely not. And somebody who I used my card such as at a restaurant for a legitimate purpose, copied the number, got the CVV off of it, gave it to somebody who scammed hundreds of gallons of fuel in a truck somewhere in Central Texas. And we have to be so careful.

However well we've done in the past doesn't guarantee that we're not going to do poorly and suffer by inattention, failing to watch, failing to pray, failing to soak ourselves in the truth so that we are not deceived. The good thing is just like a wonderful credit card company that looks out for us and prevents us from being defrauded. God, the Holy Spirit is present.

And when we cultivate that presence and that power and that insight from Him to lead us into truth, to warn us and encourage us, that is our fraud prevention. But if we are disused, if we are unaccustomed to listening to the guidance of the Spirit because we've strayed, we've become inattentive, indifferent, apathetic, distracted, the Holy Spirit can send a warning and we don't hear it. We don't see it.

Think of these people that had soaked themselves in the Old Testament scriptures,

memorized enormous chunks of it, were experts. They could argue and joust and fence with each other about fine points of the law. And the Lord Jesus comes as the living, breathing Son of God, speaking truth directly from the Father, and they can't recognize Him.

They are scriptural experts. But when the truth is spoken, it doesn't make sense to them. How tragic.

We cannot afford to let that happen to us. There are enough Christians. This reminds me of how many guitars and how many guitar players there are, and how many people play the guitar badly.

This is why I pretty much stopped playing the guitar. The world doesn't need another bad guitar player. There are enough already.

And the Lord God in heaven doesn't need another distracted, deflected, falsehood-believing Christian on the earth. There are plenty, there are thousands, tens of thousands and millions of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who are completely and utterly deceived and ineffective in bearing the genuine fruit of the Spirit, in genuinely shining the light of the Father, and having the words of the Lord Jesus and keeping them. There are 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee to Baal, but that's out of 70 million and upwards believers.

We want to be one of that small faithful number. But it takes attention. It isn't happening automatically.

You can't simply listen to Bible class, take a few notes, and assume it's all going to be great. This has been the downfall of many a doctrinal church. All of us, all of you listening to the sound of my voice, are familiar with at least one.

I can think of four that I've had personal, in some cases very close, ongoing contact with that started listening without hearing, and seeing without perceiving, and relying on the formula, and the outward format, and the speaking of tropes about God and the Word and doctrine and so on. But it was an appearance, a form of godliness that didn't access the power. It doesn't matter what vocabulary we use.

It doesn't matter what quick and convenient memory aids we have for pulling truth from the Word of God. It has to make a difference. We have to be thinking about it.

We have to be on our knees pleading with God to show us our hidden faults, to show us where and how we can live in His power, and represent the Lord Jesus genuinely, and have God as our Father, who abides with us, who disciplines us when we need it, who energizes us and points us in the right direction, who prunes us so that we can bear more fruit as we abide in the vine. But this has to be a conscious priority, not an unconscious hope, not an assumption that, well, you know, I know some really great

believers. I go to a good church.

I listen to things on the radio. I've got some books. I've got some notes that I review.

We need to be desperate. We need to be motivated. If you ever want to see or find an example of a motivated believer, read the diaries of David Brainerd or of Jim Elliott.

David Brainerd was a missionary to Native Americans a century and a half ago. Jim Elliott was killed by the Alka Indians back in the 1950s, and Elizabeth Elliott published a lot of his biography and some of his words and things posthumously. But those guys, you want to talk about somebody who woke up in the anxious to figure out how to serve God that day at whatever cost and exercising themselves.

And this is the word that they used in their journals. I get the two mixed up because they had a very similar spirit, but desperate to live a life that pleases God. Just take it a day at a time and say, this day I am going to do everything I do heartily as under the Lord.

I don't have to spout scripture and sing hymns all day long, but I have to be thoughtful. This task that I'm about to undertake, this time that I'm about to spend, am I doing it joyfully? Am I doing it as though God had personally arrived and said, will you fill in the blank here for your task that you're about to undertake? It can be anything from doing dishes and folding laundry, cutting grass, doing tasks that are associated with employment or a job or being a student or whatever else it is. Things that we undertake voluntarily, but can we dedicate it to God because it isn't the task, it is the spirit in which it is done.

It is the motivation behind it. It is the word of God that we can dredge up out of our treasury. We bring out of our storehouse things new and old, like a good rabbi, like a good teacher.

Jesus said a good faithful steward of God's word has old things and new things. Here's an old truth, but I can apply it in a new way. Here's a fresh place for its application.

But to be thoughtful and to be aware, aware of who we are, aware that in these days we are actively under attack. There are active conscious strategies that are designed to deceive us, designed to deflect us, designed to distract us and get us spun up about politics or about justice or about developments at home and abroad. Everything in the media is designed to spin us up and get us thinking about something other than who we are in Christ, why we are here in Christ, what our opportunities are.

When should I speak? When should I remain silent? When should I confess the Lord Jesus before men so that he can confess us before his father? When is it time to bridle the tongue and remain silent? There is a time for each. How do I know? I know because I'm soaked in the word of God. I am guided by the Holy Spirit.

There is a light on my path. There is an active conscience that tells me what is good and what's not good. When it's okay to eat meat offered to an idol and when it's not.

When it is okay to tolerate something that's on the edge of acceptability, being flexible about a non-essential and when I need to make an issue out of it and refrain for conscience sake, not only my own conscience, but someone else's. How can I possibly know these things? You can't write it up in a book of rules. We have to be mature.

We have to be guided by the Holy Spirit. That's what Paul is talking about here in 1 Timothy. That's what the Lord Jesus is talking about in John chapter 8 and in John chapter 14.

If we are people of the truth, the right people are going to love us. God in heaven is going to love us and others are going to attack us just as they attacked the Lord Jesus. If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God hears God's words.

Therefore, you do not hear because you are not of God. These are the world's leading experts in the word of God and they are not of God. How scary is that? You and I know a lot of the word of God, a lot more than the average believer, but how tragic would it be with all that knowledge to unconsciously and inadvertently go astray? We have to pray, sanctify our relationships and sanctify our personal actions, forbidding to marry, eating meat offered to idols.

These are our relationships and our personal actions. They need to be sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If we are not praying in depth a minimum of three times a day, like Daniel did, like David did, like the Lord Jesus did, we are going to be deceived.

You can't get through the day without prayer. Prayer forces us to think about who we are and why we're here, forces us to remember our spiritual relationships. Where are our brothers and sisters? Where is our Heavenly Father? What is the example of the captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is at the Father's right hand, interceding on our behalf? That's personal love.

Love that cares enough to discipline us when we go astray because we have a Father that we are related to in a meaningful and active way. That's what these passages talk about. Read John chapter 8, read John chapter 14, read 1 Timothy chapter 4, read Titus chapter 2. These are the things that define us and that ought to be actively circulating in our soul every single day or we are going to be neutralized.

We will be ineffective. Does God really need more Christians who don't know what's going on? Wouldn't it be great to be the exception? Wouldn't it be great to be someone that the Lord Jesus can say, there's the one that loves me. Let's go make our home with him, with her.

Let's have a fellowship meal. Let's share some of the hidden manna and the wonderful

truths that are not the commonplace. The hidden manna.

What a blessing. What an opportunity. Well, let's pause here and take when we come back.

We'll pick up here in 1 Timothy chapter 4 and see how Paul concludes this chapter.