

1Tim 24-07-03a

Greetings, this is Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is the 3rd of July 2024. We're finishing up the epistle of 1st Timothy.

We're going to look at something that really summarizes and helps conclude the letter tonight. It is something that Paul mentions here at the close. And it will be, I think, a fitting transition from this book to our next study, which is going to be the epistle to Titus.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and our investigations into His Word, and we'll begin. Father, we are so grateful for the wonderful treasures that are contained in Your Word, the daily comfort and encouragement and guidance that they provide in the hands of Your Holy Spirit, who is constantly with us to make us aware, both when we are failing and need repentance and confession, and when we are succeeding and are moving through the challenges and endeavoring to exploit the opportunities that You give us each day. We know that we are here to represent Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who in person is seated at Your right hand and on this earth is revealed by us.

And we pray that as we move through this passage tonight and look at the truths from Your Word, that God the Holy Spirit will effectually impress them on our hearts in such a way that we can be fit and able representatives of the Lord Jesus as His body, that the light of Your glory will shine through us and draw others to Yourself. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

I am really fascinated and I wondered if you caught this in our last class, our last lesson, when Paul says in chapter 6, verse 13, this is the flaps down, wheels down, this is the big airliner coming in for a landing here, these concluding few paragraphs of this letter. And Paul has had so many exhortations. He says, I urge you, I exhort you, I command that you do these things.

And so many of these are imperatives, flee, pursue, fight. I urge you in the sight of God here in verse 13 of chapter 6, who gives life to all things before Christ Jesus. There's an interesting study you can do if you put the letters of Paul chronologically in the order that we believe that they were written based on his itinerary and acts and his imprisonments and so on.

That at the beginning, he prefers the order Jesus Christ. So in the earlier epistles, and I think there is something on the order of 127 times that Paul uses Jesus Christ when he's talking about the Lord. In his later letters, he switches and prefers Christ Jesus and puts his office or his functional identity ahead of his personal name.

And so he is Jesus Christos in the earlier ones, and he's Christos Jesus in the later ones. And this, of course, being one of the later ones, you find this Christ Jesus. And that's

used, I think, 91 times in total.

So there's 90 odd versus 130 odd of the earlier form. Is it significant? I think only in the sense that as more historical distance passes from the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus and his personal name, that this is Jesus or Yeshua, who is the Christ, more to the purpose and function that he was assigned and that he fulfills. And it is often the case, whether you think about a president or any other historical figure, there is some renewed interest in George Washington, and there are some new things that are coming out.

Well, is he George Washington president or is he President George Washington? And as distance and time passes, the emphasis can change. But here he is Christ Jesus. But this is what fascinates me.

See what you think about this. Because we looked at it on Sunday, and I don't know about you, but I was unsatisfied with my own grasp of it. This is probably the most emphatic exhortation, encouragement and urging that Paul puts in this whole letter, which is full of encouragements and urgings and imperatives.

Timothy, you have got to do this. It is so important. But look at this one.

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things. What more emphatic double underline with a bold laundry marker sharpie could you put on something? I am urging you in the sight of the God of the universe who gave life to everything that has breath, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment, and so on. He has already reminded Timothy, and he charged him, and notice the order back in the previous chapter, 521.

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice. And here he is urging him again. But to invoke the heavenly throne room with the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus and the angels.

How important is this material we are looking at? To what extent should we think on it and reflect on it? Because there is no more emphatic charge in the New Testament anywhere. Find me something that is more pointedly shot at the very center of our heart than this. So what is it? He says Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate.

We covered this on Sunday, so here is your pop quiz. What is the good confession that Jesus witnessed before Pilate? And it is interesting to the point of amusing to me to go check the commentaries. I checked every commentary I've got on 1 Timothy.

I went to the web. I typed it into Google. What is the good confession? It is surprising.

Two or three of my very good commentaries glossed right over it. Because it is one of the most unobvious. Here you've got this emphatic urging and exhortation.

And in the sight of God, the angels and Jesus Christ Himself who gave this good confession. Witnessed it. Literally the verb is to witness.

Which is from Martoreo where we get the word martyr. You are witnessing something with your life on the line. That is what Martoreo means.

Even like Job said, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Though it cost me my life, I am not going to say Kourios Kaisar. Caesar is Lord.

I am going to say Christos Kourios. Christ is Lord. Jesus is Lord.

So Jesus witnessed the good confession. So we went to the Gospels. We looked in Matthew.

We looked in Luke. We looked in Mark. And then we finally looked in John.

And John is the only one who gives us any details about the conversation between Pilate and the Lord Jesus. Right? So turn back with me to John chapter 18. Because in the midst of this huge emphasis, Paul mentions this good confession.

Now, people will tell you that the Gospels had not yet been written and circulated at the time that Paul is writing and conducting his ministry. So he doesn't say, as you find in the writings of my good friend and companion, Dr. Luke, or as you find in your shorter New Testament. Apparently, Timothy doesn't have a copy of any of the Gospels.

As of yet. There's no indication. And so, how does Timothy know that Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate? How does he know what was said? What is this good confession? Paul refers to it as though Timothy should know it.

And certainly, we, who have all 27 books of the New Testament, shouldn't we know what this good confession is? I urge you in the sight of God, who gives life to all things, and Christ Jesus, who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, to keep this command. Urge and teach these things. What is this good confession? So you go to John chapter 18, verse 33.

Pilate enters his headquarters and calls Jesus and says to Him, Are you the King of the Jews? By the way, if you survey commentaries and opinions on the web, and gotquestions.org, and bible.org, and anywhere else you want to go, There's a widespread consensus that the good confession that Paul is referencing here is a public confession of your faith in Jesus. The good confession. I believe in Jesus Christ.

The only problem with that is, Jesus didn't say before Pilate, I believe in myself. Or I believe I am the one the Father sent. Jesus doesn't confess faith of any kind here.

What does He confess? And this is our only account. It's John 18 or nothing. So, are you the King of the Jews, is the question.

Jesus' first reply is, do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me? In other words, why are you asking the question? Remember when Jesus healed a blind man in the ninth chapter of the same gospel. And the authorities hail the recently blind man before them and say, where is this man that healed you? Who is he? And the guy says, why are you asking? Do you want to worship him too? Do you want to believe in him also? And why are you asking the question? And this is very important, I think, for us. When we are approached or when there's an opportunity for discussion or witnessing about who we are and why we are here.

Is to ascertain why is someone asking? Because we don't always answer. It should not be a knee jerk response. Jesus didn't say, am I the King of the Jews? I'm so glad you asked.

He says, why are you asking? Because the motivation behind someone's questioning makes a difference. It matters. And Jesus is engaging in this conversation for our benefit.

And it's in the word of God for our benefit. And so when you think about the good confession, the first thing for us to consider is, is this the time and place to make a good confession? Because it's not always the case. There are often occasions where Jesus says, tell no one what just happened.

The transfiguration, tell no one. The upper room, Talitha Kumi, daughter arise, tell no one. The healings that Jesus performed.

Several times he tells them, don't tell anyone. Of course, there's free and rank and rampant disobedience. But it appears that Peter, James and John really did keep the things that they saw secret in the upper room and at the Mount of Transfiguration until later.

They were the head of the class. But there is a reason that Jesus asks this question. Are you curious yourself or are you asking because somebody else put this idea in your mind? Are you personally curious or have you got other reasons for bringing this up that aren't connected to personal interest, personal belief, personal faith? If you're asking because you're looking for an excuse to crucify me or because this will make it a matter for Rome.

And there's widespread reconstruction, deconstruction about who crucified Jesus and why in the current day. And they're saying, well, Jesus made himself odious in the eyes of Rome. Have they read John 18? He could only be a threat to Rome if he is attempting to, shall I say, lead an insurrection.

If he's an insurrectionist against the government of Rome, which Jesus manifestly is not rendered a Caesar, the things that are Caesars. He never criticized the Roman

government. He never rabble roused in opposition to the status quo of their oppression under Rome.

The presence of centurions. Jesus never invade against any of that. So when he says, are you the king of the Jews? When Rome has appointed a king of the Jews, this is a fraught question.

You might as well say, are you an insurrectionist? Are you attempting to lay claim to political leadership of Israel? Is that why you're here? So Jesus says, are you asking this of your own accord? Or did others say it to you about me? In other words, Rome up to this point, including Pilate, is unaware that Jesus poses any kind of a political threat. Is what I'm hearing accurate? Are you claiming to be the king of the Jews? Are you trying to start a movement and overthrow Herod and create a big problem for Rome that's going to affect me and my aspirations and my career and my governance here? So Jesus says, are you asking because you've got a concern? Are you personally concerned? Why would Pilate have a faith concern about whether or not Jesus is claiming to be king of the Jews that he is governing? Well, it's going to be a problem for him. He doesn't say, are you claiming to be the one who can forgive my sins and save me and give me eternal life? This is not a faith confrontation.

This isn't about saving faith. It's not about any kind of faith at this point. This is a political question.

Now, if someone is confronting us, and this is our first point of application. If someone is interrogating and inquisitive and is asking questions to you or to me about our faith because they've got a political axe to grind or a social axe to grind, or they're trying to figure out, are you a voter on one side of the party division or the other? One side of the presidential election or the other? One side of left, right, conservative, liberal? Are you one of those Christians? Are you one of those that is trying to foist your morals on us? If this is discernible as the reason behind someone questioning about our faith, the only way I can put this in colloquial terms is Jesus is very cagey here. He doesn't just answer the question.

He is analyzing the source of the question. And you and I, when we are asked, even when we say, oh, an opening, I'll take any opening, any opportunity. If somebody just asks any question related to my faith, boy, turn on the fire hose.

Here it comes. Katie, bar the door. We should be thoughtful and careful and observant and perceptive the way the Lord Jesus is thoughtful and careful and observant and perceptive.

Why are we having this conversation? Because if you're not genuinely interested, I'm not going down that road. And we haven't even gotten to the quote unquote good confession yet. This is just the backdrop.

This is the stage. But notice how Jesus clarifies. What are we talking about? You've brought me in here.

You're asking me a question. I'm a captive audience. Literally.

So do you say this of your own accord or did others say it to you about me? Are you looking at me through a lens that was handed to you by somebody else? Are you pigeonholing me? Are you categorizing me? Not based on your own observation, but on secondhand information you got from other people. What about us today? Are we being pigeonholed and classified and caricatured based on the perception of Christians, especially conservative Christians who care about morality, who don't like to see evil promoted? And are we just being broad-brushed and put into a convenient box by people who have heard from others? Oh, you're one of them. So Pilate answers in verse 35.

Am I a Jew? Why would I have an interest in you being the king or not unless I was a Jew? Am I a Jew? This again weighs heavily against the notion that Rome was anxious to find Jesus and snuff him out because he was a political threat. Pilate apparently has no idea about kingship issues related to Jesus. And if you read the preceding context, the Jews have said, we want you to dispose of this guy.

And he says, what for? And they say, well, he's done evil. And he says, well, what kind of evil? And they say, look, we're telling you he's evil. You need to deal with him.

They don't say he is a threat to Rome. He's claiming to be king and we don't want to be oppressed because of him. And Pilate here, am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me.

What have you done? Why are they anxious for you to be destroyed? Pilate has no notion. Have you got a hidden army over the hill? Are you claiming a throne? Are you going to set up a rival coup of some kind? What have you done? Now, this is where we are getting into the good confession. And why do we want to know? We are to represent the good confession.

This is why Paul brings it up to Timothy in the middle of this strongest of all exhortations you can find in any of the pastoral epistles. There is none stronger. And Paul cites the good confession of the Lord Jesus.

And this should define, this should motivate, this should clarify what the mission is. What the job is. What you and I are supposed to do.

Because Timothy is supposed to be teaching us the very things that he is being exhorted and charged with doing and being. So, how can we bear witness to the good confession if we are not real sure what it is? Jesus answered in verse 36 of John 18, My kingdom is not of this world. If you are concerned that I am here to throw a monkey wrench into the status quo, that I am here to wreak political change, social change, economic change,

you're wrong.

My kingdom. What is a kingdom? It is a realm that is defined by, exists under, and respects and observes some authority that defines the kingdom. If you have a kingdom, there is a king.

What is a king-kingdom relationship? It's not, I am a father and you are the children. It's not, I am the boss and you are the employees. It's not, I am the colonel and you are the troops.

This is king and kingdom authority. King is higher than all of those things and defines the kingdom by and through his throne, right? So, when Pilate says, are you king of the Jews? Are you the socio-political head of this ethnic and national group? And Jesus answers, my authority, the kingdom that I define, isn't socio-political. That's what the world is.

The world is the cosmos. Remember cosmetics comes from the word for order. My kingdom is not of this order that is defined by human government and by social and political norms and agendas.

My kingdom is not of this order. If my kingdom were of this order, the force would be my servants taking up arms and fighting. If we were in the physical realm, I would have physical soldiers with physical weapons going out doing physical damage to wreak a physical order type kingdom.

Now, what does this tell us about our role in the world? Certainly, we are to let our light shine, but light does not go out and try to perpetrate social change. You could interpret this to mean, if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would be at work in the world wreaking my policies of good. In slave markets, in areas of prostitution, in money exchanges.

Even when Jesus overturns the tables of the money changers, what does he say? This is a bad economic policy. You're oppressing people. These people are coming here and you're ripping them off.

You're selling them a lamb for four times the price and that's not right and that's not fair and that's not just. I'm here for social justice. What is Jesus' motivation for overturning the tables of the money changers? By the way, there were money changers all over the area.

They're all over the place. They're scattered all over. You're hoping to catch people.

The settlers that sold shovels and panning materials and rope and other equipment for the gold rush of 1849 and the gold rush to Alaska. They didn't all set up in Alaska. They were all along the roads and the money changers were the same way.

Which money changers did Jesus attack and overturn in the temple and what was his justification? My house shall be called a house of prayer. You have made it a den of thieves. He didn't say you've made Jerusalem a den of thieves.

You haven't made the roads along the highways and byways a den of thieves. You are not just thieves but you're thieving in the house of prayer. This is supposed to be a place of worship, not a place of commerce.

And you've subverted it. You have perverted it. You have corrupted it.

Same thing here. My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.

If we were trying to wreak some kind of change in the world, we would use the tools of the world to do so. But my kingdom is not from the world. And notice this is almost chiasmic.

My kingdom is not of this world at the beginning. My kingdom is not from the world at the end. Right in the middle, my servants would have been struggling.

My servants would have been fighting. What's in the middle of it's not of this world? It's not a physical struggle. It's not a physical fight.

And that's not just taking up arms. That is all of the notion that if we build it, he will come. We'll make some sort of social difference.

Not that we can't make a social difference, but that's not the reason we're here. The difference will come by our presence, not by going out there hammering tongs. So, that is part A of the good confession.

First of all, why are you asking? Secondly, we're not talking about the physical world. This is a spiritual kingdom. Third, Pilate says, so you are a king? He says, my kingdom, so there is a kingdom somewhere.

So you are a king? Jesus answers, you say I am a king. So many people want this to be an affirmation. You have said it, you're right.

And that's not what he's saying. He says, you say I am a king. You get the idea really that the kingdom of the Lord Jesus is really almost metaphorical here.

And when Jesus says, I am the door of the sheep, all others who are climbing over the fence are thieves and robbers. I guard the sheep, I'm the door. So, you're a door? Well, you say I'm a door because you don't get the significance of what I'm talking about.

Jesus is an authority. There is a spiritual kingdom, but it doesn't match earthly, human, secular expectations of what a kingdom is and what a kingdom does. And this is kind of a

sideways negative.

You say I'm a king because you don't understand the kind of king that I actually am. And I would also encourage attention to the tense. So you are a king? This is in the present tense.

So you are a king? Jesus says, you say I am a king. Is Jesus a king or is Jesus going to be a king? Is it present or is it future? David was anointed by Samuel to be the king of Israel. And when he's in the cave of Adullam with his trusty mates, somebody comes out and says, are you a king? Well, you could say I'm a king, but David in the cave, is he a king? Yes and no.

He has been anointed. He is certainly going to be a king, but he is not yet the actual king. It's like our salvation.

It's already, but not yet. Are we saved? Do we have eternal life? Are we citizens of the heavenly economy? Paul says our citizenship, our palatuma is in heaven. Well, how many of the benefits of that are you currently enjoying? Seeing your mansion? Got your people of the world serving you hand and foot? We are saved, but we pretty much look exactly like everybody else in the world to the unpracticed eye, right? Because our life is not of this world.

Our eternal life, our inheritance, our benefits, our blessings, the source of our power, the source of our guidance is not of this world. It's the inspired word of God and the presence and power of the third member of the Trinity within us. We have life, but we don't have it yet.

We do, but we don't. In one sense, we do. In another sense, we don't.

In one sense, Jesus is a king. In another sense, he is not. In one sense, David is a king, but in another, he's not.

There's a time when there will be no doubt when David is publicly anointed and takes the throne and begins to rule. He's not just de jure. He's de facto, right? So you say that I am a king.

There is truth in there, but do you understand the already not yet nature of it? So Jesus says, look, now this is the heart and the center of the great confession. For this purpose, I was born, and for this purpose, I have come into the world, and it is not to be a king. You say I'm a king.

You're talking about the wrong issue. I am a king. We could talk about kingship.

We could talk about the millennial age. We can talk about descent from David and all the rest of it. You say I'm a king.

Let me tell you the real issue. This is the good confession, and it's not Jesus is king. It's not Jesus is Lord.

There's a lot of people that go to the early church confessions and say, well, you know, the earliest church confession, and Paul refers to it in Romans and other places, you can't say Jesus is Lord except by, and John makes reference, Jesus is Lord, and that's the great confession. Jesus doesn't say Jesus is Lord here. He says, you say I'm a king.

Here's what I say. You say I'm a king. I say, here's my purpose.

And what he says has no relation, bearing, or connection to kingship from the world's perspective. This is the great confession. For this purpose, I was born, and for this purpose, I have come into the world.

Double emphasis on Jesus arriving, appearing, and being present, and visible, active, and known to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. Do you notice an interesting parallel here? Look at verse 36.

What is the kingdom of? The kingdom is not of this world. Everyone who is of the truth. It's not, are you of the world? It's, are you of the truth? That's the issue.

Is your kingdom spiritual or earthly? Is it of heaven, kingdom of heaven, or is it kingdom of earth? My kingdom is not of this world. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. I'm here to bear witness to the truth.

If you listen to the truth, you're of the truth. And you listen to my voice because my voice is bearing witness to truth. So what would you say the great confession is, the good confession? It's all about the truth, the spiritual truth, not the truth of physics, not the truth of geometry, not the truth of biology, not the truth of any other thing you want to look around at in the world.

The kingdom is not of the world. The kingdom is defined by truth. It is a kingdom of truth.

The good confession is acknowledging the truth and being of the truth and listening to the voice. Haven't we seen that all through this letter, having his words and keeping them? That's who loves the Lord Jesus. That's who loves the Father.

That's who's going to experience their presence. An absent king is generally in exile. An absent king is not sitting on his throne.

A present king has influence. If the kingdom is not of this world, then our hearts have to not be of this world. If the Lord Jesus is going to be present, if God the Father, who gives life to all things, is going to be present, we have to be of the truth.

That's why, as we saw last time, all of this emphasis on don't pay attention to narratives,

to fables. It's all about the truth. The contrast here is truth versus error, truth versus fables, truth versus those who have got some other agenda and are saying things for their own purposes.

So, now we know what the good confession is. The good confession is the Lord Jesus Christ is the truth, witnesses the truth, communicates the truth, and presides over a kingdom of truth. If you want to talk about King Jesus and being kingdom people, we should be truth people, defined by, ruled by, in accordance with, working in the midst of and in alignment with truth.

Truth is all important. This is the word of God. This is doctrine.

This is good words of faith, wholesome words, wholesome faith, wholesome pattern of sound words because those words communicate truth. It's about truth. Well, what are the implications for us? How does this work out? We'll pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we will have our concluding lesson in 1 Timothy.