

1Tim 24-07-03b

We're picking up here in the concluding session on 1st Timothy. As for me, this has been just a very invigorating, spiritually beneficial study from start to finish. I am encouraged, I have been convicted, and I have gotten a lot of clarity on things that were a little bit ambiguous and amorphous in my own mind.

But as we draw to the conclusion here, I just wanna focus. We saw those 10 imperatives this past Sunday, the seven personal exhortations to observe, to keep pure, to flee some things and pursue others, and knowing which ones are which is so important, to fight the good fight. And that word fight, by the way, fighting the fight is our friend agonizomai, to agonizomai the agon.

And it means that there can be some pain involved. It's a struggle that you can feel. It's not a light, convenient sort of casual struggle.

This is a life and death struggle against real opposition. And so we fight and we lay hold of our eternal life. And laying hold is a process.

We don't have it and it's in the tank, it's in the bank, it's good to go, don't worry about it. We are exhorted to lay hold of our eternal life. And to lay hold of it means to have it in our hand and have it make a difference on a daily basis.

We haven't entered into it yet, but we can certainly grasp hold of it and don't let go. Keep the commandments without spot, blameless until the appearing of the Lord Jesus. It's not over till it's over.

And our last breath is the appearing of the Lord Jesus. There's no gap. We have a E-G and an E-K-G.

And at the point that those lines go flat, that is the Lord Jesus appearing. And that's why it doesn't say, keep them until you die. Keep them until you see the Lord Jesus, because they are the same thing.

And in verse 20, to guard what has been committed to our trust. What is it that's been committed to our trust? It's the truth. The truth has been committed to us.

And we're gonna see this in the upcoming pastoral epistles. These things that have been committed and entrusted to you, pass along, commit and entrust them to others who will be able to understand them, to believe them and to pass them on. We'll see that coming up.

But these exhortations all center on the good confession. Paul reminds Timothy that he received this gift and confessed the good confession in the presence of witnesses. And it is the same good confession that the Lord Jesus gives before Pilate.

And what is it? It is a commitment to the truth. To be committed to a thing, you have to understand it. You can't commit to something without grasping it, having faith in it, knowing it's high and it's low, it's depth, it's breadth, it's extent.

To make a commitment without knowledge is a very dangerous thing. People do this in marriages all the time and that's why they like to talk about there being a 50% failure rate on marriages. It's because people make a commitment that they can't keep or they change their mind and don't want to keep.

That cannot be the case with God's truth represented by and embodied in the Lord Jesus himself. John 14, six, you know it well. So what are the implications of this good confession for us? Well, as I said, first of all, you have John 14, six and Jesus says, I am the way, I am the truth and the life.

I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. What is not included in that threefold claim? He doesn't say, I am the king. He doesn't even say, I am the Lord.

There was this giant kerfuffle, John MacArthur and lordship salvation. And well, if Jesus isn't Lord of all, he's not Lord at all. And if you don't acknowledge his lordship, you're not saved.

And you might as well be in the room with Pilate missing the point or the scribes and Pharisees, the chief priests, the elders and the leadership of the people missing the point. Remember when Jesus fed the crowd and then they wanted to seize him and make him king and he separated himself from them. Jesus did not want the people of Israel for whom he is the Messiah anointed king descended from David and the rightful heir to the throne.

He would not let the people make him king. Why? Why should people not be trying to make Jesus king today? What is the authority that made David king? What is the authority that made Saul king? What is the authority that made Solomon and every subsequent king in Israel, the king? Whose authority establishes the king through anointing? Whose authority? Is it by acclamation? Is it a democracy? Is it an election in November? Who makes the king? God makes the king. Christians who are trying to make Jesus king are pilot.

Are you a king? You say I'm a king and you're missing the point. The good confession is about the truth. So John 14, six, I am the way and the truth and the life.

The issue is not, can you make a better world? Can you relieve the oppressed? Can you assist the orphans and the widows? Can you engender social change? Not that that's a bad thing, but it's not the issue. These things are a result of something else. Even the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ is a result.

Have you ever thought about this? What is the order of the dual nature, the dual coming

of Jesus? If you're in the heavenly throne room and you're privileged to be consorting with Jerobeam and Seraphim and listening to the heavenly councils and the elder angels, there's a hierarchy among the angels and there is something equivalent to elders and chief ruling angels. And so they're in the heavenly conclave and they're listening to God speak. And God is explaining his agenda.

And he says, this is what we're gonna do in human history. I am going to send the second person of the Trinity. I am the father, he is the son.

The spirit is going to be the energizing means. When we do creation of the world, I am gonna give the plan. The second person, the son, is gonna execute it and it's gonna be done in the power of the spirit.

Without him, nothing was made that was made, talking about the Lord Jesus. You have the spirit hovering on the face of the water in Genesis one, but it all comes from the father. God says, let there be, and it happens.

There's intermediate agency that's not discussed in Genesis one, but there is intermediate agency. God just didn't speak things directly from his lips into existence. There's intermediate agency.

This is why John tells us in his gospel, without the Lord Jesus, without the word, nothing was made that was made. Well, where is he in Genesis one? Well, it's just not spoken of. It doesn't mean it wasn't there.

Where's the second blind man with Bartimaeus? Where's the second demon possessed man with the Legion? Just because it isn't mentioned doesn't mean it isn't there. There's a point and a purpose to what is mentioned and what is left for later or left for a different account. I am the way, the truth, and the life.

What is the mission? What is the purpose? What is the overarching plan that the angels heard in the throne room? I am going to make a new creation of sentient beings and I am going to draw them to me. Those who are of the truth, those who receive a love of the truth will come to me. Those who don't are going to the lake of fire that has already been prepared for these who have rebelled and departed and cut themselves off.

That happened previous to the creation of this world and human beings. And it is a demonstration. It is a proof.

If you can't see it because you're too close to it, let me put it out here. It's like a parable. Look over here and maybe you can see what you can't see in yourself.

This is why we have the scriptures. This is why we have the example of Israel. This is why the example of the gospels and the early church.

By looking at them, we should then be able to apply what we learned to ourselves. Human history is a giant demonstration of the function of free will and the necessary choice of placing faith in God. And we have a more difficult situation.

Jesus says to Thomas after the resurrection, you've put your finger in these wounds and you believe. Blessed are those who not having seen believe. The angels all had God in view and they made a conscious choice about a visible God that there was no mystery.

There was no faith required. It is simple obedience, which is going to be replicated in the millennial kingdom and beyond. But now, not having seen, we believe.

How convicted are the angels who could see and rejected God? And here are creatures made lower than the angels that God is going to crown with glory and honor in and through Jesus Christ because of response to the truth. Response to the truth and we respond in faith. I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life.

Truth is at the center. There is a way to the Father. There is life in and through and from the Father.

And those are the setting, the way and the life are the setting for truth that is in the middle. Truth is the most important thing. You can't come to the Father except through the truth.

The Lord Jesus is the way. He is the life. Why didn't he just say, I am the way and the life? Have you ever thought about, you know, a reader's digest, New Testament? Just leave some stuff out, boil it down to what I like that's more essential.

Jesus says to his disciples in the upper room, look, the Father is there. I'm the way, I'm the life. You can't come to the Father, but through me.

But right in the middle of it, why does Jesus say, I am the truth? Because without the truth, there is no way and there is no life. You have to have the truth. This is why John 8.32 records Jesus saying, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

And you remember the context of that? Once again, he is emphasizing this idea. If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. That's John 8.31. If you remain, abide, live in.

You have a home, you have a house, right? You abide there, you remain there. That's where you, the origin of your life. You might sally forth, but you come back.

That's your home base. That's your foundation. If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.

He doesn't say, if you make me king, if you call me King Jesus, if you go out and implement some kind of social agenda, abide in my word. The word of Jesus expresses

and communicates truth. That's it.

What he says is true. It is truth. The mind of Christ is truth and you will know the truth.

So I want to be set free by the truth. I want to know the truth. So what do I need to do? What does 31 say? Abide in my word.

Know the words of the Lord Jesus and soak in them, live in them, spend time in them, be defined by them. If we are going to fulfill the commandments, the first and greatest commandment, what is it? Old Testament and new. What's the first greatest commandment? You know this.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, all your mind. The law and the prophets are summed up in this and loving your neighbor. So to love God and to worship him, what do you need to do? We're turning backwards in John.

We're having it. We were in John 14, then we went to John 8. Now we're going to go to John 4. Flip back a couple of pages to John 4.24. John 4, you know this because you know how to navigate the New Testament. John chapter 4 is the woman at the well, right? What happens at the well? There's a time coming when it's not going to be about Jerusalem.

It's not going to be about Mount Gerizim. In John 4.24, you worship what you do not know. We know what we worship.

Salvation is of the Jews. God has chosen to route the means of salvation for the world through Israel, through the Jews, through David, through the tribe of Judah. But the hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

For the Father is seeking such to worship him, spirit and truth. How many times have we said it? How does God's power come into our lives? It is through our worship. We worship him in spirit, sensitive to the presence, the leading, the conviction, the encouragement, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us by means of the truth.

And living a life of faith and obedience is worshiping the Father. We worship him by presenting ourselves a living sacrifice. Romans 12, one and two.

Holy and acceptable to God, it's our reasonable service and we do it in spirit and truth. That's how we worship. Worship is sacrifice.

I deny myself, I take up my cross and I follow. The cross is an implement of sacrifice for the Lord Jesus. This is the means by which he offers himself a sacrifice for sins on the cross.

We take up the cross, we offer ourselves living sacrifices in spirit and in truth. So as you look at the good confession, these are the elements of the good confession. The good

confession is the truth, representing the truth, living the truth, believing the truth, acting in light of the truth.

This is the good confession. It's not, I believe in Jesus, it's, I am of the truth. And because I'm of the truth, because I have received a love of the truth, I am a true disciple.

And nothing comes ahead of serving my father in heaven in the light and the power and the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. God is spirit and his worshipers worship in spirit and in truth. What does the Holy Spirit do? How does he operate? Once again, you're back to John 16, 13.

When he, the spirit of truth comes, the Holy Spirit's name is the Numa Hagiu. He is the Holy Spirit, but he is the spirit of truth. John 16, 13, when he, the spirit of truth comes, what's he going to do? He's going to give me spooky insights into who I should talk to or who I shouldn't, or whether I should take option A or option B and two doves are going to fly over and I'll know that it's time for me to, when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

He will lead you into all truth. Carnal mind cannot understand the things of the spirit, they're spiritually discerned. What are the things of the spirit? Truth.

Truth. Matthew 7, verse 16. When you listen to people, are they speaking truth or are they speaking errors? By their fruit, you will know them.

Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? What is the fruit of truth? What is a source of truth? Does it make a difference? Are you enabled and empowered? The words that are communicated by these individuals, if they are true, it is going to bear fruit. If you're listening to someone teach the word of God and you don't find a difference happening in your life, you don't find the Holy Spirit speaking and guiding and enabling and empowered, listen to somebody else. Find someone who is communicating truth because the truth will set you free when you know it.

You will be able to abide in the words of the Lord Jesus and you will have freedom, you will have peace. And if you're not getting those words from somebody who purports to be a source, who purports to teach, who purports to be fulfilling that function, if there's not fruit, if you don't get grapes and figs, then for you, that communicator is a thorn bush and it's going to hurt, it's not going to help. Notice he doesn't say you don't pick grapes from corn stalks or grapes from some innocuous sycamore tree or a myrtle tree.

If you're trying to pick grapes, you're going to get stabbed in the hand instead. It isn't just not going to be beneficial, it's going to hurt, it's going to be painful, it's going to take you the wrong way. It's going to put you off.

I'm not looking for grapes anymore. Every time I try to pick grapes, I get stabbed in the hand. People don't pick grapes from thorn bushes and they don't get figs from thistles.

It is either painful and retrovert, backward-moving, reversionistic movement, or it is positive. You have grapes and figs, you have benefit, you have positive fruit. Not every teacher is suitable for every person.

There are many flocks, there are many shepherds. I like to think that our group has coalesced because we share a common enthusiasm and we're all singing out of the same hymnal, the GTBC hymnal, and we're glad to do so. And I'm not trying to run anybody off.

I'm just saying each of us has to be fully convinced in his own mind that we are, in fact, getting what we need from the Word of God. And if for any reason someone isn't, their first and foremost obligation is not to the pastor or to the group, it is to the Father and to the Son and to the Spirit and to the truth. Find the truth.

You will be in the realm of wholesome words, wholesome faith, wholesome pattern of life, wholesome doctrine. And wholesome means I'm getting grapes, I'm getting figs, I'm not getting thorns and thistles stuck in my hands. That is Matthew 7, 16.

And notice Jesus says, "By their fruit you will know them." These alleged sources. Are they preaching truth? Or anytime you listen, you start bleeding. This is why Jesus emphasizes the truth to such a great extent.

Matthew 5, verse 18. These last two are coming from the Sermon on the Mount. If you wanna pay attention to the Sermon on the Mount, pay attention to these parts.

"Truly I tell you," in Matthew 5, 18, "until heaven and earth disappear, "not one jot, not one tittle "will disappear from the law "until everything is accomplished. "The law is holy, righteous, and good. "The law is God's truth." It's an earlier delivery.

It's previous in time, but the law represents truth. Paul, these are the words of the Lord Jesus I've just given you. Paul says the same thing.

Romans 1, verse 18. You know it well. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven." Not the frown of God, not the slight disapproval, not the angst of God or the sadness of God.

"The anger of God, the wrath of God "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness "and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth." Suppression of the truth, explaining away the truth, giving excuses, giving explanations, subverting, covering up, distracting, deflecting. When you hear people who are not willing to admit the truth, and this includes us, if I mess up, I am reluctant to acknowledge that. Nobody likes to say, hey, let me tell you something.

I was wrong. It doesn't really come to the surface of our fallen nature. We have to become people who love truth to such an extent that even when the truth is detrimental to me, I'm going to speak it anyway.

You know what's true? I screwed up. That was my fault. That was my fault.

I was wrong. That was me. If that's the truth, we need to be self-sacrificial of our ego, of our feeling of what our reputation is going to be or what someone's going to think.

This will diminish me. This is going to make people smile or laugh or think less. Really? Is that more important than being of the truth? If we are of the truth, we will speak the truth.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven. Why does it say from heaven? Why doesn't it say it's revealed? Heaven is where the throne room is. This is where the plans and purposes and policies are originated.

There are going to be policy judgments. There are going to be permanent edicts from God related to these who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. It's a lie.

Let no one deceive you. There's nothing that gets God's prophets and apostles and the Lord Jesus himself more in gear to speak against it than deceiving, deceiving ourselves, deceiving others. Ephesians 4.15, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is Christ.

How do we unite? How do we grow into a healthy, wholesome body that represents the Lord Jesus with him as the head? Speaking the truth in love. Speaking the truth. How important is the truth? It doesn't say speaking the kingdom policies of the Sermon on the Mount.

Those are a part of the truth, but you can't, you know, by dissecting and taking certain elements out of context, that's no longer truth. Ephesians 1.13, you were included in Christ. You are entered into Christ when you heard the message of truth, which is the good news of your salvation, the gospel of your salvation.

That's what got us united with Christ to begin with. And that wonderful chapter of blessings and privileges and potentials and opportunities in Ephesians 1, the wonderful menorah that we studied, you heard the message of truth. Ephesians 5.9, the fruit of the light.

Do you want a life that is characterized by light? Do you want to bear fruit? The fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, truth. Bearing witness to the good confession is what Jesus did before Pilate. And what did he say? My purpose is to bear witness to the truth.

That's the confession. The truth is the confession. If you want to bear witness to the good confession, our lives, our words, our actions, our thoughts, our motivations should be characterized by and shine forth truth.

We saw this in our 1 Timothy letter in chapter three, verse 15, Paul says, I'm writing you these things so that if I'm delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are fathers and mothers in Christ.

We are a family in Christ. How should we conduct ourselves in God's household? It is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and foundation of what? The truth. The truth, the foundation on which it's built, the pillars that support the walls and hold up the roof, it's truth.

That's where we dwell. That's where we live. That's who we are.

Remember in 1 Timothy chapter two, when Paul is talking about, God, our savior, who desires all men to be saved and to do what? God wants all men to be saved. You say, wow, that's great. What else does he want? Do you remember? In verse four, chapter two, God wants all men to be saved and come to heaven.

God wants all men to be saved and not be in the lake of fire. God wants all men to be saved and stop doing evil deeds. God wants all men to be saved and be nice to each other.

What's the rest of the verse? God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. Our goal after salvation is to know the truth. The good confession, Paul, Jesus says, I've come to bear witness to the truth.

Paul brings it up to Timothy. The good confession, you made it in the presence of witnesses, that you're gonna be a communicator of truth. So don't forget the good confession that Jesus made before Pontius Pilate.

The only thing of substance that Jesus said to him is, this is the purpose for which I came into the world, the reason I was born, to bear witness to the truth. That's the confession. It's not public acknowledgement of faith in Jesus.

Jesus didn't publicly acknowledge faith in himself. He represents the truth. He is the truth.

That's why we had in 2 Timothy 1.14 coming up, guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. What is that good deposit? What is that trust? It's the truth.

It's God's truth. That's what he is supposed to guard. We're gonna see this in our upcoming Sunday morning when we get to Titus 1.1, preview of coming attractions.

Titus 1.1 says, Paul, a servant of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which leads to godliness. Godliness with

contentment is great gain. Great is the mystery of godliness.

Use obey it. It's the very same word. I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which leads to godliness.

Without knowledge of the truth, your godliness isn't there. What is the opposition? What is the challenge that we face? We're gonna see this in 2 Timothy 3, verses eight and nine. Men of depraved minds, who as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.

They will not get very far because as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone. Their fables, their falsehoods, their deceits, they are rejected in the faith because it isn't grounded in the truth. Finally, Ephesians 4.25. Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Put off falsehood. Don't dissemble. Don't distract.

Don't deflect. Don't avoid. There are truths that need to be spoken and they are hard truths.

They're harsh truths. They're difficult truths. But each of us must put off falsehood.

Each of you, this is an individual responsibility. It's not, well, I'm a part of a truthful group. We have to be a truthful person.

Again, 4.25 of Ephesians. Each of you must put off falsehood. What does that mean? We're wearing falsehood.

We've got it on like a jacket. We've got it on like a pair of pants. We've got the falsehood hat.

We've got the falsehood socks. We've got the falsehood belt. We've got the falsehood T-shirt.

Put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor. If we speak truthfully to neighbors, how much more the members of the body. Speak truthfully to those who are next to you.

We are all members of one body. This applies to neighbor love, and it applies most importantly to one another love. Be truthful.

So in the life of a believer, in the life of the assembly and the fellowship of believers, and our witness before the world, the essence, the central, most important element is we are people of truth. It's definitional. It's essential.

It is the good confession that Jesus witnessed before Pilate that Timothy witnessed when he acknowledged his gift in the presence of witnesses and on the laying out of hands

entered into his function as a teacher of truth, a pastor of grace and truth. That concludes our study of 1 Timothy. We will start Titus on Sunday morning.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful gift that we have in each of these gospels, letters, and books of the New Testament in particular. We thank you for the revelation of truth from the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit and the inspired record that we have before us.

We pray that as we reflect on it, God, the Holy Spirit will use it to divide us to the dividing asunder of our soul and spirit, our joints and marrow, and expose those thoughts and intents of our heart that need correction and rebuke and instruction so that we can be people of truth, people of righteousness, those who present ourselves as holy and acceptable in your sight, fit representatives of the Lord Jesus until the day that he returns to take us to himself and present us before your throne. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.