Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

How to Treat False Teachers, Part 1
Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:3-6
Code: 54-4

Turn in your Bible to the first chapter of 1 Timothy. We have recently begun a study of 1 Timothy. We've had a couple of messages getting started, looking at the introduction, and now we come in this next section to verses 3 through 11. This section has to do with dealing with false teachers. I want us to take verses 3 through 11 as a unit, but we're going to divide it between two weeks, this Lord's day and next.

Let me introduce our study today by reminding you of something I'm sure you're very much aware of. In John's gospel chapter 8 and verse 44, it reminds us that Satan is not only a murderer but Satan is also a liar. One of the manifestations of the lying intent of Satan is the proliferation of false teachers that besiege the gospel and the church through all the history of the church's life. False prophets and false teachers are a part and parcel of the battle the church has to fight in every age.

And that really isn't anything only for us to have to deal with for in fact God's people through out all of history have had to deal with false teachers. We go to the Old Testament and we find warning after warning after warning against those who teach falsely. I'm particularly reminded of Jeremiah chapter 23 clear through chapter 27 where you have many references to false teachers.

Wherever God sets the truth, Satan endeavors to sow lies and falsehood and error. We are reminded, no doubt, of Matthew chapter 7 where we hear the words of our Lord telling us that there will be false teachers, false prophets who though they are wolves disguised themselves in sheep's clothing, which was the garment of a prophet, as if they are true prophets of God. We are reminded later on in the gospel of Matthew in that great Olivet Discourse in which Jesus preached a sermon on His own Second Coming that He warned that there would be many false Christs coming in the future. John tells us in 1 John 2 that already in the world there are many antichrists. The book of Revelation draws for us a very clear picture of the consummation of the church age, God's final picture of what's going to happen on the earth. And it is a time filled with deception and lies, false teaching, false doctrine, finally summed up in THE false prophet and the Antichrist himself.

In 1 Timothy, the very epistle to which we look, we are reminded in chapter 4 verse 1 that seducing spirits are loose in the church, loose all around us with their doctrines of devils or demons. They speak lies. The Apostle Paul in writing to the Galatian church warns them on several occasions in that letter about false teachers. In writing to the church at Colossae, the major portion of the second chapter is the defense of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ for salvation, as over against those false

teachers in Colossae who are attacking that very sufficiency.

So, in a very general sense, any student of the Bible is aware of the fact that wherever you have the truth, you will have the encroachment of error. I really don't think we need to just limit our understanding of that to the Bible alone because here at Grace Church we have experienced the fact that Satan has endeavored most recently to sew lies among us. Those of us who have been here for the last couple of months, which includes certainly most of our congregation, will recall that I've made a couple of references to false teachers in the parking lot, false teachers in the patio, trying to pull away people to their errors. I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that there have been some in our own midst who as members of our church have pulled to themselves willing disciples who have been led astray and taught to believe that what we teach here is heresy, short of the truth of God. And they have been brought to confusion and chaos in their understanding of what is truth.

And I really believe, beloved, that this is only the beginning. I don't believe it's going to lessen, I believe it will intensify as God gives our ministry a greater opportunity and a greater voice in our day.

Well, it was so in Ephesus. That church in Ephesus was, I suppose by all measures, a great church. It had known the blessing of God as few churches in history will ever know, that is to say three years of the ministry of the great Apostle Paul himself. A heritage unequalled in most situations. They knew what it was to have Paul as their mentor for three years, according to Acts 20. And yet as he drew to a conclusion that ministry with them and gathered the elders at Miletus about 30 miles away from Ephesus as he was traveling by ship back to Jerusalem, he called them to himself and he said to them in Acts 20 starting at verse 29, "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock." And like those described in Matthew 7, they come dressed in sheep's clothing.

That doesn't mean they're dressed like sheep, that means they wear wool which was the garment of a prophet.

And then he says, "And also of your ownselves shall perverse men arise and draw away people from the truth." And then he said, "So I commend you to the word of His grace which is able to build you up and assure you an inheritance." Paul knew that the church at Ephesus, like any church, would be under attack from lying prophets and teachers. That is exactly what has happened.

It is the legacy of every church that stands strongly for the truth to have to deal with what Paul calls in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 17, "Hucksters of the Word," kapelos, those who corrupt the Word. Those who come as he says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 2, dishonestly, those who handle the Word of God deceitfully.

And the subtlety of false teaching of this kind is that it handles the Word of God but that it misrepresents its teaching.

It is no real threat to the Christian church to teach something that is explicitly and overtly and recognizably antiBible, anti Christ and antiGod. It is the subtlety of the teaching which appears to be biblical that is the grave danger the church faces and that which pulls away unwary souls.

The church at Ephesus, though it had a great history, a great beginning and it was the church out of which were spawned other sister churches in Asia Minor and though it had the ministry of Paul was never impervious to false teachers. And so, Paul writes to Timothy to tell him to stop the false teachers and set things in order in that church. He commands Timothy to keep the teaching pure and set an example for other churches to follow.

Now in these opening verses in which he introduces this necessity of stopping false teachers, he helps Timothy and us to understand the necessity for this by four key ideas that I want you to grasp. And we'll be looking at them this Lord's day and next.

Stopping false doctrine and stopping false teachers demands that we understand four things. First, we need to understand their effect. Secondly, we need to understand their goal or objective. Thirdly, we need to understand their motive. And finally, we need to understand their result...what they bring about in the chaos.

Now to begin with it's important for us to understand the error and what it creates. I suppose the first point could equally be to understand their error. Their error has a very serious effect.

Let's look at verses 3 and 4 and see if we can't understand their error and how we define that error and what it brings about. Verse 3 says, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to myths and endless genealogies which produce speculations rather than the plan of God which is by faith." Now we'll stop at that point.

Here we find the error of the false teachers simply introduced to us. But let's set the scene a little bit. He starts in verse 3 by saying, "I besought," and that's a word of exhortation, a word of some strength. It's important that you stay, I'm pleading with you to stay...which may indicate that Timothy was looking happily for some new assignment because this was not an easy one.

Here was a young man, Timothy, of the age of about 35. He had been with Paul for 20 years. He was a true replica of Paul, as it says in verse 2, "My genuine son in the faith." But even so, he had a certain timidity about his character. He was somewhat intimidated by those who would despise his youth. He found it, no doubt, difficult to deal on the level of intellectualism that these errorists were dealing on. He was not really in the sense of polemics and apologetics able to handle their arguments at their level. And he may have felt a little inadequate for the task. Furthermore, it wasn't

easy to displace church leaders. It would be one thing if you were working with the people in the pew in the laity, but to be dealing with these leaders and false teachers was a very difficult task. And it may well have been that Paul anticipated that and that's why he said, "I beseech you to stay there. I want you to stay."

Paul had already gotten things started. In chapter 1 verse 20 it says, mentioning Hymenaeus and Alexander, two leading false teachers, perhaps the two leading ones at the very top of the list, "Whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme." Apparently Paul himself when he was there dealt with Hymenaeus and Alexander and sort of set Timothy in motion and left saying, "Now you do to the rest, you do the mop up what I've done to these two." We must stop and eliminate these false teachers. And so, Paul has left for Macedonia to visit the Philippians and Timothy is left with a very difficult assignment, trying to get rid of false spiritual leaders in the church at Ephesus and perhaps in the sister churches in that area.

Now as I mentioned to you a week ago, this letter cannot fit into the chronology of the book of Acts. The book of Acts ends with Paul in prison in Rome. And chapter 28 it is believed that he then was released from that imprisonment and upon the release from that imprisonment he journeyed by ship to Ephesus. On the way he visited Colossae. He had promised Philemon in verse 22 of that letter to Philemon that he would come there. And he did, no doubt. And then he went from Colossae to Ephesus. Timothy coming from Philippi to Ephesus. They met there, they dealt with Hymenaeus and Alexander. They surveyed the situation. Paul left Timothy there and he himself went on to Philippi to do the work that God would have him do there, as indicated in Philippians 2:24.

So, Timothy is now there. Paul has just gone to Philippi.

He's not gone long but that he writes back this epistle because he knows Timothy has a very difficult task and he wants to strengthen Timothy's courage. He wants to strengthen his authority with the people who also will hear this letter. And so it's a letter of great importance as it deals with the elimination of false teachers in the congregation of that church and the others surrounding it.

It is interesting to note that verses 3 and 4, though they are a complete thought, lack the grammatical structure to be a legitimate sentence. It is elliptical. He starts out with a clause beginning with "as" but he never resolves it. And so in the Authorized in italics the last two words of verse 4 are "so do" because the editor feels he's got to complete the sentence.

And we understand that Paul at this point is not concerned with grammar, which is a hint about the exercised heart that he is expressing over this issue of dealing with Timothy in regard to the false teachers. He is not too concerned about grammar at this point, he rather starts with a passionate cry for Timothy to accept the command to do the job that needs to be done in this church that is so dear to Paul's heart. He knows Timothy to be a genuine child in the faith. He knows Timothy to be able by

the Spirit to carry out the task and passionately he encourages him to do that.

In fact, in the middle of verse 3 he says, "I am begging you as I have begged you all along, as I besought you, please command some that they teach no other doctrine nor give heed to myths and endless genealogies." In other words, he is really kind of emphasizing the fact that Timothy has apostolic authority and he wants him to command those people to stop. You don't deal lightly with false teaching. You don't deal lightly with false teachers. You don't deal lightly with error in the church. It must be dealt with immediately and firmly. And so he gives him what is a military command, parangello basically is a word that carries the idea of a military command. It's not when you have an option to respond or not to respond to, it is one which demands a response from an inferior to an order given by a superior.

Now Paul, according to chapter 3 verse 14, had hoped to come himself. The truth was he never did get there, as we find from his second letter to Timothy. But he's writing in case he can't come and, of course, he never did, to strengthen Timothy's hand.

Just a brief reminder that Ephesus was a key city. It was a provincial capital of that province of Asia Minor. It was somewhat declining economically because the river that ran through Ephesus was depositing silt on the shore line there at the sea and consequently it was pushing the city back inland because of the silt deposit and it was losing some of its economic capability and trade. But it remained to be a significant city, due primarily to the Temple of Diana or Artemis. This particular pagan cult was a fertility cult in which worship was expressed by sensual and orgiastic fertility rites of an indescribable nature. And in the middle of that place is this church that Paul so passionately cares about and to which he had sent Timothy, or left Timothy for this ministry.

Notice that he uses the word "some." "Command some,"

certain individuals is the idea here. It seems to indicate that there were only a few of them but they were having a rather wide influence. No doubt not only in Ephesus, as I mentioned, but in the scattered region around there. And Paul wants them dealt with immediately even as he immediately dealt with Hymenaeus and Alexander. It's very possible that they were all known by name not only to Paul but also to Timothy. We ask the question, why are their names not mentioned? And I suppose the answer is the Lord didn't want to give them any publicity on the one hand...on the other hand, the Lord didn't want to list some names and leave someone out who then by being left out would feel himself rather impervious to any censure.

There is no hint either that they were outsiders like those in Galatia and those in Corinth who had come to pollute the assembly there. In fact, I'm convinced that the some, the certain individuals were very likely elders in the church at Ephesus and some of the surrounding churches. They were those in the highest level. They were pastors who were false teachers.

Now the reason I'm...I tend to feel that way is just because of the flow of this particular epistle. For example, in describing them it says in verse 7 that they had presumed themselves to be teachers. And we all know from further looks at this epistle that teaching was the unique role of the elder or bishop or pastor. In chapter 3 verse 2, at the end of the verse, it says in describing a bishop or overseer who also would be a pastor, an elder, same person, just describing different facets of that man, "He is to be skilled in teaching," didaktikos, a skilled teacher. In chapter 5 verse 17, those elders or pastors who ruled well and were counted worthy of double honor were those who were especially skilled in handling the Word and doctrine.

So it seems as though these would have aspired and maybe arrived at the point of being recognized as teachers within that congregation, they had reached the point of being a pastor or an elder there.

It also is curious to me that in verse 20, Hymenaeus and Alexander were dismissed by the unilateral act of the Apostle Paul. It says Hymenaeus and Alexander whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. Apparently Paul had to dispense with these men, put them out of the church, turn them over to the devil, himself. Which probably says that a coalition of the good people in the church couldn't do it which may indicate that they had reached such a state of prominence that the people themselves couldn't deal with them and it had to be done with apostolic authority. And that's why Paul did it and that's why Timothy was left there to do it as well.

Furthermore, in chapter 3 the fact that the first part of the chapter is so preoccupied with the qualifications of an elder, or the qualifications of a pastor seems to indicate that there were unqualified people who had reached that place and there needed some clear instruction to be given regarding who should have that office. Then also in chapter 5 we are reminded in verse 19 that an elder should be accused but always in the proper way, before two or three witnesses, and if they do sin they should be rebuked. And there should be no partiality given to them because they are elders.

Now all of these things tend to indicate that these false teachers had reached a very high level in the church and had to be dealt with under...in this case...apostolic confrontation.

Now Timothy is told in verse 3, look at the end of the verse, to command them with a military command, give them orders that they teach no other doctrine. Now that's a long verb...that's one verb, most likely coined by Paul. He takes the word "to teach," didaskalia and he takes the word heteros which means "of a different kind." We talk about heterodoxy being something that is in distinction from orthodoxy. And he puts those words together and most likely coins the word "teaching heresy" is what it means, command them to stop teaching other than the truth, teaching teaching of a different kind that conflicts with the revealed truth.

So, no doubt they were using the role of pastor. They were using the role of elder. They had prominence in the church. And they were using the Word of God probably the Old Testament, most significantly, and using that as their base and mingling with it, teaching inconsistent with the Old Testament and to be sure, teaching inconsistent with the gospel of the New Testament.

Therefore they had changed, twisted and perverted the whole nature of Christian truth.

Now they had a standard. I mean, it's 30 years after the day of Pentecost and even on the day of Pentecost it says that Peter preached and 3,000 were saved. And Acts 2:42 says, "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles'...what?...doctrine."

They knew that the substance of revealed truth come through the Apostles and the Apostles' doctrine was the basis of what was true. And these, no doubt, had departed from that, they had violated it. That's why in 2 Timothy 2, Timothy is reminded to teach only those things that you've heard from me among faithful men, among many witnesses, commit those things to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. But they had deviated from the truth and they were teaching error.

Now we get a little more into what their error was in verse 4. If we're going to understand their error we need look to verse 4 and we'll see how he begins to discuss it. "Neither give heed," which means to turn your mind over to, or to occupy yourself with, command them not to teach any other doctrine, "Nor to give their minds over to fables and endless genealogies."

It's the word muthos, fable, myth we get from it. Legends and fables and fanciful stories that are concocted and manufactured by men and seducing spirits, which would be called as chapter 4 calls them "doctrines of demons," if they were not doctrines invented by men themselves. They were making up things. They were very much like the Athenians who are described in Acts 17:21 in a rather general description that gives us insight. It says, "All the Athenians and strangers who were there in the city of Athens, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing." They were preoccupied with some new thing philosophically and apparently here these were introducing new things to tantalize the people in Ephesus. And these legends, these manmade or demonically designed contrived lies and false hoods were being passed off as divine truth.

It's very hard for us to specifically identify these. In fact, we can't identify what the legends were because we don't have that information revealed. We don't know what they were reading into the genealogies or how they were interpellating those. We really don't have specifics. It is enough to know that what was being taught was contrary to the truth. It isn't necessary for us to know all the details about the error.

But it is highly likely that we can sort of systematize it by just flowing a bit through the epistles. For example, we find this in verse 4, "They were giving themselves to myths and endless genealogies."

Verse 7 tells us something else. "These who were doing this were desiring to be teachers of the law." So somehow these myths and genealogies were connected to Old Testament law which leads us to believe that there was a Jewish orientation in this false teaching.

Chapter 4 tells us that these seducing spirits and doctrines of devils were filled with hypocrisy and lies. Part of it had to do in verse 3 with forbidding to marry. They were advocating celibacy and they were also commanding people to abstain from food. So there was a certain sort of monkish quality, what we call asceticism or selfdeprivation, a certain monastic approach that true spirituality was found through legends and genealogies and secretive interpretations of the law and through all of these kinds of abstinences where you don't get married and you don't eat certain things. And by your selfdeprivation and indulgence in these fanciful things, you will attain to the standard of divine acceptance.

Chapter 4 also verse 7 further identifies this as profane and old wives fables, myths told by little old ladies that do nothing but bring about ungodliness...is the intent there.

Look at 2 Timothy and we'll find...or actually look at chapter 6 of 1 Timothy, first of all, chapter 6 verse 4 further defines these. The people teaching them are proud nonothings who spend their time doting about questions, disputing about words. In other words, it's just...verse 5 says...a whole lot of perverse arguments of men who have corrupt minds who are absolutely destitute of the truth. And the reason they're in it is not for godliness but for money. And, my dear friend, you will find that the bottom line on all false prophets is money...always the bottom line.

Second Timothy further helps us to understand because Paul writes this not long after, writing Titus in between and then 2 Timothy, but he also talks about this perversion that was going on in verse 14 of chapter 2. He says of these things, put them in remembrance, commanding them...again he gives them strict orders to lay out commands to these people...that they not argue about words which have no profit but do nothing but subvert the hearers. Apparently they were quibbling and arguing about words.

It may have been that they had taken words out of their context.

They had committed to them legendary allegorical meanings. One commentator, J.N.D. Kelly(?) said the Jews had a mania for family trees and they could literally read in and out of those family trees all kinds of bizarre allegorical speculations. And frankly, much of the rabbinic Haggadai(?) much of their teaching consists of Scripture rewritten on an allegorical basis with really no relation to rightly dividing the word of truth, as he says in verse 15. That verse indicates that they were using the Scripture but they were wrongly understanding it, wrongly interpreting it and consequently wrongly applying it.

By the way, that wasn't limited only to them. That's gone on through the years and it's still going on today. There are people today who still wrongly divide the Word of God. And as I said at the beginning, the subtlety of false prophets and false teaching is that it handles the Word of God but it corrupts it.

They are hucksters. They use the Word of God to make money, to make merchandise out of people. They twist it and pervert it for their own end.

But there have always been these bizarre interpretations of Scripture. I think about Pope Gregory the Great's interpretation of the book of Job. Quote: "The patriarchs, three friends, represent the heretics." He's trying to take it allegorically and bring it into his own time...the antiCatholics. "The seven sons are the twelve Apostles," whatever you say, Gregory. "The seven thousand sheep," he says, "are God's faithful people and his three thousand hump back camels are the depraved Gentiles."

That kind of bizarre interpretation of Scripture was common in the rabbinical period.

I have to confess it's still common...and I am somewhat frightened by it. The other day on the charismatic television there was a person being interviewed and they said to this person, oh, they were asking all kinds of questions and he said he was born in 1929. And he said God had him to be born in 1929 because his life verse is Matthew 19:29. Oh, they went into euphoria over that. "Oh how wonderful, and what is Matthew 19:29?" "With men it is impossible but with God all things are possible." Oh, what a life verse. That's your life verse cause you were born in 1929.

And then the host said, "Oh I was born in 1934, what's Matthew 19:34? That will be my life verse." And so his wife looked up Matthew 19:34 and, of course, Matthew 19 doesn't have 34 verses. And so, Mark doesn't have 19 chapters, so you're left with Luke. And he said, "Look up Luke 19:34...Look up Luke 19:34, that will be it." And she looked it up and with great excitement she said, "And Jesus said, I have need of him, I have need of him." And he said, "That's it...He has need of me, He has need of me." And she kept looking and this she looked up and said, "No, no, no, it's talking about a jackass." And I said right.

It is frightening what people have done and do to the Word of God. However, that may have been his verse, I don't want to argue the point. Well, you understand.

In 2 Timothy this wrongly dividing the word of truth is further discussed in verse 16 as profane and vain babblings that increase only unto ungodliness and it is a word that eats like a gangrene. In verse 18, they have erred from the truth.

Down in verse 23 he describes it further as foolish, unlearned questions that only start arguments. Chapter 3 verse 7, "They are ever learning but they never ever come to the knowledge of the truth." Verse 8, "They are of corrupt minds.

They resist the truth. They are reprobate concerning the faith."

In verse 13, they are seducers who grow worse and worse, deceiving others and themselves being deceived. In chapter 4, they are teachers who are the result of the lusts of people who want their ears tickled. They turn away from the truth. They turn to fables.

And Titus on Crete was dealing with the same thing, no doubt. Titus 1:10, they are unruly, empty talkers, deceivers.

And then he says this, "Especially the ones of the circumcision."

Which again indicates to me that this is some...not some pregnostic thing, but this is probably something that is more like a Judaizing element. It may have some elements of the Gentile pagan philosophy in it but it seems to me that this is a sort of a Judaizing thing where they're coming with the law only they're interpreting the law allegorically with all these legends and myths that comes out as nothing but a lot of babble, with no significance. And he says of them in chapter 1 of Titus, verse 11, "Their mouths must be stopped because they subvert houses and they teach things they shouldn't teach," and here we go again, "and they do it for...what?...filthy lucre." It's the money that's always at the bottom line.

Verse 14 calls them Jewish fables and commandments of men.

That is, designed by men that turn people from the truth. They profess, verse 16 says, that they know God but their works deny that, they are abominable, disobedient and in fact everything they do demonstrates that they are reprobate. Well, you get the idea.

Chapter 3 verse 9 of Titus, foolish questions, genealogies, contentions, arguments about the law that are unprofitable and vain. In fact, he discusses them in verse 10 as heretics who should be admonished once and then twice and then rejected. They are subverted sinners, selfcondemned.

Now that's really just an overview of what this heresy was.

And again we cannot really label it in any specific way except to say that it was contrary to the truth of God. And as I said earlier, it isn't important that we label and understand everything about a heresy, everything about a misinterpretation, it is important that we understand that what God is saying in this epistle is that stuff has to be...what?..stopped. It has to be dealt with. And it's frightening to me to

look across America and see a church that is so naive that people can literally sit and hear false teaching and not recognize it. As Walter Martin said one time, the average Jehovah's Witness can take apart a Christian in 30 minutes because he really doesn't know what he believes. And people are becoming victimized by all these false teachers because the teachers that they have though they may in their heart be true are not teaching their people how to know and recognize that and how to prevent it from intruding into their lives. And sometimes it's just as simple as turning off your television, turning off your radio, throwing away the book, or walking away from a person who encroaches on you with false teaching. Mixing sacred truth with myths corrupts the Word of God. And the cults have done it for years. And liberalism does it and we have to be ready to deal with it.

Just to sum it up. The teachers that teach it are described in the pastoral epistles as ambitious, avaricious, ignorant, hypocritical, puffed up, corrupt in mind, bereft of the truth, impostors, deceivers, liars, defiled and unbelieving, disobedient and abominable. Nice bunch. They have, it says, swerved, turned aside, made shipwreck of their faith, fallen away from the faith, consent not to sound words, erred concerning the faith, erred concerning the truth, turned away from the truth and are reprobate from the faith.

Now I want you to notice the effect of this error in verse 4. "They minister speculations." They provide speculations. In other words, instead of truth they just question, question, question and that creates confusion. They stir up useless questionings. Now watch this, "Rather than the plan of God which is by faith." Now the word here that you see maybe as edifying, if you have an Authorized, is really the word oikonomia which Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 3 a couple of times, it means stewardship or administration or dispensation. But it has to do with a modus operandi, it has to do with a means of operation. And connected with theo, the term God, it is the operation of God or the plan of God or if I may add this, the saving plan of God. What they are teaching stirs up questions, useless speculation, rather than the plan of God which is by faith. In other words, it's strikes a blow at the gospel of saving faith. Therefore we conclude that it is a system of works righteousness. It is a legalism...some kind of Judaizing chaos mingled with pagan Gentile philosophy that in effect negated the salvation by grace through faith which was the apostolic message and the gospel of Christ.

So, what is the effect? The effect is to attack the gospel.

And let me give you some little formula that you can remember that's very simple because of the chaos in the world today sometimes people get confused about religious systems. I can simply it for you very readily. There are only two religions in the whole world...only two. There is the religion of divine accomplishment...there is the religion of divine accomplishment, that is that God in Christ accomplished salvation apart from any effort of man. And then there is the religion of human achievement, that is that men by something they do attain unto salvation. The religion of divine accomplishment is the Christian gospel. Every other religion in the world in one way or another fits

into the category of human achievement. And wherever false doctrine comes to strike a blow at the gospel, it will always offer the fact that man in and of himself somehow attains unto the level of pleasing God. And these people who came with their Jewish legends and fables who tried to interpret the law which they didn't even understand were no doubt coming across with some kind of legalistic approach, some kind of self denying approach, some legend involved genealogically confused philosophy that was imposed upon the grid of Scripture so that everything became chaotic. It's no different, dear friend, than the Mormons who pick up the Bible and say, "Yes, we believe the Bible," but they haven't got a clue what the Bible means unless they strain the Bible through all their Mormon documents which misrepresent misinterpret and confuse. It's no different than someone in Christian Science who says, "Yes, I believe the Bible, but I cannot understand it unless I have The Key to the Scripture," which is written by Mary Baker Eddy Patterson Grover Frye, she had a problem.

And there are those people who cannot understand the simplicity of the Word of God unless their particular teacher or their system reinterprets it according to the fanciful legends and musings of minds that are both human and demonic. It is essential that we understand that when anybody comes along with another gospel, Paul has given us a word in Galatians 1 that says, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be...what?...accursed, or anathema, devoted to destruction."

False teachers are not to be dealt with lightly, not if you understand their error. And their error is inevitably a blow struck at the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. It is not a trifling matter.

Now the second thing, and I just want to introduce this to you, is we need to understand not only their error and the effect that it has, keeping people from salvation, but we need to understand their goals. What are their goals? Verse 5, Paul says to Timothy, "Now the telos, the end, the objective, the goal of the commandment I'm giving you is love." I want to see in the church what God wants to see in the church. And what God wants to see in the church is love. Jesus said that men would know them by their love. And it's essential that the church be marked as those who love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and love their neighbor as theirself, as Matthew 22:37 and following says is the great commandment. We are to be marked out by love. "Herein is love, not that we love God but that He loved us and gave Himself for us." And then he goes on to say, "And if we belong to God, we'll be marked by...by love because God is love," 1 John 4:7 and 8.

So, the pervasive characteristic of Christians is that they are marked by love. The word is agape, it's that love of choice, that love of will, that selfdenying, selfsacrificing love that says "I live my life for the benefit of God," that's my love toward Him, "I live my life for the benefit of you," that's my love toward you. "I live my life for the benefit of the lost,"

that's my love toward them. That's not emotion, that's a love of choice, that's the highest...that's the most wonderful kind of love.

"The purpose that I'm giving you, Timothy, is to create love there." And I'll promise you one thing, that's not the goal of false teachers. The goal of the commandment is love. And what is it that brings love? It is a pure heart and a good conscience and unfeigned or unhypocritical faith. The concept of a pure heart is a magnificent Old Testament concept...a rich Old Testament concept. The Psalmist in Psalm 24:4 and 51:10 where David speaks cries out for a pure heart, a clean heart. David says, "Create in me...what?...a clean heart, O Lord." First Samuel 16:7, I think it is, where we are reminded that God looks on the heart while man looks on the outside. The heart is the center of thought. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. The heart is the center of man's belief and conviction and moral character. It is the center of his spiritual desires. It is the center of his longings toward God. And when the heart is made pure by the washing of regeneration, when the heart is single in its devotion through faith in Christ, when it is as Romans 6:17 says an obedient heart, then it is a pure heart. And a pure heart is one devoted to God with an undivided allegiance because it's been washed and cleansed by Christ. And out of a pure heart comes love. And a good conscience...good, agathos, perfect, as to produce pleasure and satisfaction and a sense of well being.

The conscience is your selfjudging faculty. It's your self judging faculty. And frankly, it responds to your mind.

Whatever's in your mind is going to activate your conscience.

Your mind is the engine...your conscience is the flywheel.

Whatever is in your mind will activate your conscience. And if you have a pure heart, you're going to have a pure conscience.

In what sense? Your conscience will not accuse you, right? Your conscience will not damn you. Your conscience will not condemn you. Because if you have a pure conscience, there's nothing to condemn. The selfjudging faculty is going to say all is well and your conscience is going to provide for you peace and joy and freedom from guilt because your heart is pure. And that's what Paul means in Acts 24:16 when he says, "I always want to have a conscience void of offense toward God." Certainly don't want to have a conscience like these false teachers, right? What kind of conscience do they have? First Timothy 4:2, "They have one that's seared, like with a hot iron, scarred."

And then thirdly he says this love comes out of true faith, genuine faith, not the hypocritical faith that false teachers manifest. True faith, faith that has no pretense. Let me tell you about a false teacher. All right?

A false teacher has a dirty heart because it's never been cleansed by the true gospel...faith in Christ. A false teacher has a guilty conscience because an impure heart triggers a guilty conscience...unless that conscience has reached the point where it is so scarred with scar tissue that it's lost its sensitivity, like in 1 Timothy 4:2. And a false teacher has a hypocritical faith. He is, of all things, a phony. He wears a mask. He is insincere. And that kind of life will never produce the love of God, true? The goal then and the objective of the false teacher is not to create an environment of love, the goal is to fulfill their ego and fill their pockets. That's the goal.

And so, verse 6 says, "From these things that lead to love they have turned aside." They have turned aside. They have swerved, means to miss the mark, to fail in hitting the target.

They have swerved and then turned aside, two verbs. One means to miss the mark, one means to turn off course. Their goal wasn't love, they weren't shooting for goal...the goal of love. They weren't headed for the goal of love...they swerved from that.

They've got another goal and their goal...it's very clear...is the fulfillment of their own ego, verse 7, "They desire to be known as teachers of the law." And in chapter 6, their desire is gold...gold. And like travelers who leave the right road to take a path to death, they end up teaching, verse 6 says, irrelevant noise, vain jangling.

Perverted hearts, scarred consciences, hypocritical faith will never produce love. That's why there's no genuine love in the heart of a false prophet and he can produce none. Do you understand that genuine love as spoken of here, a pure heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith can only be accomplished by a transformed life through Christ? You understand, don't you, that false religion cannot restrain the flesh? False religion cannot reform the life. False religion cannot transform the heart. And all it is is a lot of noise. Unfortunately and tragically it is often damning noise. And that is why Titus 1:11 is so important, "Their mouths must be stopped."

So, Timothy...he says...if you understand their error and its effect, and if you understand their goal, then you will know how important it is for you to command them to stop. There are two other things we have to understand and we'll look at those next Lord's day. Let's bow in prayer.

Lord, I'm thankful in my heart this day for a godly grandparents who knew Your Word and godly parents who knew Your Word so that the legacy that I've received is the truth. I'm thankful for godly teachers and my days of education who influenced my life by their living and their teaching and gave me the truth. I'm thankful for godly men who have written and filled my mind and heart with truth. I'm thankful for those who stand alongside in the ministries through these years who bring to my own life truth. I thank you, Lord, for allowing me to escape the tragic error that has engulfed so many people, and this alone by Your sovereign grace. And, Lord, too, I thank You that in this church Your truth has

been held up and sound doctrine has been taught. And, Lord, I thank You for that. And I pray that You will continue to preserve that and help us to know as Paul knew that because of our blessing from Thee we are not impervious to the encroachment of false teachers...we expect them as wolves from the outside and as perverse men rising up in the midst. But, O God, may we see it for what it is and may there be in our congregation Timothys who confront it, who silence it, that we may go on believing the truth to the glory of God.

O God, I pray at the same time that You will...You will give YOur people across this nation ears to hear the truth and discern it and know the error in its subtleties that would lead them away. And that You would even preserve so many lost souls from being persuaded by the seducing spirits that the doctrines of demons are in fact the truth of God. Lord, put us on the front lines for the truth.

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