How to Treat False Teachers, Part 2
1 Timothy 1:7-11
54-5

Let's open our Bibles this morning to 1 Timothy chapter 1. We're looking again at verses 3 through 11. The opening charge that is given from the Apostle Paul to Timothy to carry out a work in the church and the region around the church in Ephesus.

Now as I mentioned last time, the primary objective that Paul has in mind with Timothy in the writing of this epistle is to encourage Timothy to bring the church to a place of sound doctrine and godly living. He is concerned about the impact of false teachers, not only what they say but what they model by way of a life style. And he is greatly concerned that Timothy reverse the impact of these false teachers. In so writing to Timothy he has left us a letter which all of us in the church of Jesus Christ today, or in any era, can benefit from because we all face the same potential encroachment of false teaching and unholy living.

To give you just an idea of the theme that surrounds not only 1 Timothy but 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, I want to note the two key words in all three of these epistles are the words didaskaliaand eusebeia. Didaskaliais the word most frequently translated "doctrine." It is used 21 times in the New Testament, 15 of those times in these three small epistles. That gives us a key to understanding what the theme of the epistles is. It is all about doctrine, the need for sound doctrine. The other word, eusebeia, is the word translated most often "godliness." That word appears 15 times in the New Testament and is used 10 of those 15 times in these three epistles. Both of those words are used eight times in 1 Timothy alone. And when you find in a brief epistle a word repeated eight times, you can understand that it is woven through that brief epistle in a thematic way. Just that alone tells us that Paul's concern in writing to Timothy is for true doctrine and godly living in the church. And that makes it essential for us even today.

Now to let you know how important these two features are of true doctrine and holy living, look at Titus. Titus being the second one of these three epistles Paul wrote, though it's third in order in the New Testament, and in the letter to Titus, Paul is dealing with much of the same kind of thing that he dealt with in writing 1 Timothy. And Titus, not unlike Timothy himself, is called upon to do a very similar task.

But you'll notice in Titus chapter 1 that as Paul outlines to Titus the kind of leaders, they're called elders in verse 5, they're called bishops in verse 7, just two different terms for the same pastor, the same leader in the church, but as he discusses them, he is concerned about their holy character and about their ability to deal with sound doctrine...those same two things. Their character is the issue in verses 6 through 8. "A man who is to be a leader or pastor in the church is to be blameless, he is to be a onewoman man, to have children who believe, who are not accused of ungodly conduct, or being unruly, undisciplined." Again in verse 7, "He must be blameless as the steward of God, that is realizing that his life and ministry is a management responsibility for God who is the real owner and

possessor. He's not to be selfwilled, not soon angry, that is not hot tempered. Not given to wine, not violent...literally means not to use his fists...he is not to be given to filthy lucre." In other words, he's not in it for the money. "He is to love hospitality, that is he is a lover of those things which benefit strangers. He is a lover of good, sober mindedthat is he has his priorities in right order. He is fair. He is holy and he is selfcontrolled." Now that's the character of a godly man. That's godliness. And when Paul wrote to Titus, he had the same concern that he had when he wrote to Timothy. That in the church there would be leadership who were marked out by godliness.

The second thing and the second key word in these epistles was this matter of sound doctrine, of correct teaching. And so the second aspect of church leadership, beginning in verse 9, is the ability to communicate truth. This one who was an elder, or overseer, or pastor in the church is to be able to hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught. In other words, he never deviates from the truth so that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and to confute the opposers. For there are many unruly and empty talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, that is Jews who wanted to impose salvation by Mosaic law on people. Whose mouths must be stopped because they subvert whole houses, they teach things which they ought not and they do it for filthy lucre sake, for money. "One of their own, even a prophet of their own people said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons and this testimony is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish myths and commandments of men that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure, unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient and to every good work reprobate. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."

Now here again in the description of the qualifications for a pastor, it is essential to recognize that there are two broad categories. One has to do with godly living, and the other has to do with sound doctrine. Those are the two things that are to mark out the leadership of the church. And the encroachment of Satan into the church is always the encroachment of unsound doctrine and ungodly living. And against that must come the strength of godliness and truth.

Now go back with me to Matthew chapter 7 for a moment and to the words of our Lord who anticipated this particular problem that the church would face. Jesus has brought to a climax the Sermon on the Mount with an invitation in verse 13 and 14. The invitation is to enter into the narrow gate on to the narrow way which is the way of life everlasting, the way of salvation. And after giving the invitation, He also gives with it a warning to watch out for the broad road which leads to destruction. It is a religious road but it does not go to heaven. It says heaven but goes to hell. I'm calling you, Jesus says, to the true road, the true path, the true salvation, the true life of God.

But, He says, there is another road, a road of religion on which many walk who do not really know salvation at all. And in regard to these two paths, no sooner does He offer the invitation to come to the right path, than in verse 15 He says, "Beware of false prophets." Because for every true prophet calling people to the narrow gate and the narrow way there will no doubt be a multiplicity of false prophets calling people to the broad gate and the broad way that leads to destruction. Beware of them. They will come to you, He says, in sheep's clothing. Now what is sheep's clothing? That's easy enough, it's wool. That's what you get from a sheep, it's wool and wool is the garment of a prophet. A prophet wore a woolen robe. And what you have here is not someone dressed up like a sheep but someone dressed up like a prophet who comes claiming to articulate the Word of God but inwardly is nothing but a wolf wanting to tear and shred the sheep. And so we are aware of the fact

that our Lord instructs us that no sooner will we offer the invitation to the true gospel and the true salvation than we will see also those calling for a decision that leads only to damnation...misleading false teachers and false preachers who only show the way to hell though they don't announce it as such.

And, frankly, as I said last week, this is not new. If you want to read Deuteronomy 13:1 to 5, write it down, you'll see that even back in the book of Moses in the law of Moses there was the presence of false teaching. You read the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah and you see it there. We are reminded by...in the New Testament...by the Apostle John in that little epistle, 2 John, in verse 7, "Many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ comes in the flesh, this is a deceiver and an antichrist."

We are reminded as Paul brings the book of Romans to a conclusion in chapter 16 verses 17 and 18, "I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned and avoid them for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own body, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the innocent."

Peter in 2 Peter 2:1 says there are false prophets among the people, just as there were false prophets. There will always be false prophets is his point, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies. And verse 2 says, "Many will follow their pernicious ways." And verse 3 says, "They will make merchandise of those people for their own gain."

In 1 John 4:1, John says, "Tests the spirits to see whether they are of God for there are many deceivers gone out into the world."

Now they are dangerous because they claim to be from God and they claim to speak God's Word. And we've gone over that. Jeremiah reminds us in chapter 5 verses 30 and 31 that the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests rule with their own authority and my people love it that way. In Jeremiah 14:14 he said, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in my name, I have neither sent them nor commanded them, nor spoken to them. They are prophesying deception."

Now they are dangerous because their deception is a damning deception. And it comes from that most damning deceiver of all, Satan, who disguises himself as an angel of light, says 2 Corinthians 13:11 to 15, and all of his messengers are disguised as angels of light and out they go to deceive. Some are heretics. And I suppose we could sort of generally define a heretic as a person who openly rejects the Word of God and teaches contrary. That's one kind of false teacher.

Others we could call apostates. Apostates who are those who once followed the faith but have now turned away. And then there are just the general deceivers who come alongside and not like heretics do they deny the faith and not like apostates do they say they once believed it but now they've turned from it, but they pretend to still believe it. And they want to look like orthodox fundamental evangelical Christians, and the truth is they lie...they lie. Jesus said in Matthew 7 in the passage to which we have looked, "That you will know them by their...what?...by their fruit." Not necessarily what they say but you look a little closer to their life and you'll see.

Invariably the false teacher cannot produce good fruit because evil cannot produce good. Jesus says you cannot have good coming out of an evil source. A tree cannot produce both good and evil

fruit. And so they will produce evil fruit but they will cloak it. They hide their bad fruit inevitably under Ecclesiastical garb, or they had their bad fruit under the isolation of unaccountability. They exist without any accountability to anyone and the people can't get near enough to them to see the reality of what's under that cloak.

Some of them hide their evil fruit under a holy vocabulary. Or association with good fruitful Christians. Some of them cover their evil fruit with belonging to a Christian association or with biblical knowledge. But usually they can't hide it from everyone all the time. And as you look close at a false teacher, you will see the fruit. Their character is faulty. Peter calls them in 2 Peter 2 "filth spots and scabs, disease, polluted, wells without water, clouds without rain, dogs that lick their own vomit." All kinds of horrible titles because their character is vile. They do what they do for money. They make merchandise of people. These are the false teachers.

And as we go back to 1 Timothy, let me just briefly remind you that they had appeared in that place as well, in Ephesus, where Timothy was given this ministry. They had arisen in the church at Ephesus, and no doubt in surrounding areas. And Timothy is there to straighten the situation out. And it is not an easy task. He's there to teach sound doctrine and he's there to deal with unsound teachers. He's there to be an example of godly living. He is to teach sound doctrine and set an example in his own life, and then to put out the false teachers.

Now, we need to learn from this. This opening charge from verses 3 through 11 really sets the scene for the rest of the epistle. And in it the Apostle Paul gives Timothy to understand four things that will convince him of the necessity of moving against false teachers. First, to understand their error. Secondly, to understand their goal. Thirdly, to understand their motive. And finally, to understand their effect. Now when we understand these four things, we will therefore grasp the urgency with which we must deal with such people.

First, let's be reminded about understanding their error. Verse 3, Paul says, "I want you to stay there, Timothy, in order that you might command certain individuals to teach no other doctrine." Not doctrine that gives attention to myths, Judaistic myths, no doubt, as we learn from a general look at what was going on. Endless genealogies which do nothing but produce speculation rather than the plan of God which is by faith, that is the saving plan of God. So what you have here is a substitute for the saving gospel. Their error was they invented a new means of salvation...salvation through fables and endless genealogies and speculations rather than the beautiful marvelous saving plan of God which is by faith. Like all false teachers, there was no narrow gate, there was no repentance, there was no confession, there was no admission in meekness and humiliation that you could not attain under the divine standard but rather they had come up with a system of works righteousness that was a parallel to the apostate Jewish system of their day. Their religion of human achievement, works salvation, the popular gospel that "you're okay like you are, just keep a few laws and everything is going to be fine." But they needed to be stopped because their error was an error that was absolutely the most vital issue of all.

You see, if you...if you believe wrongly about the gospel, everything else is a moot point, right? If you believe wrongly about the saving gospel, you're damned to hell forever. You have to get that right. There are some places for variation, that's not one of them. So we need then, Paul says to Timothy, to understand their error. And their error is that they have diverted from the saving plan of God. So a false teacher then in the technical sense is one who teaches other than the saving gospel.

Someone asked me this week about people who might have a different view on this Bible verse, or they might have a different view on a certain doctrine of Scripture, are they false prophets? Well, they may be teaching error, they may be teaching falsehood, advertently or inadvertently, but a false teacher is primarily one that is teaching a wrong gospel. The others would be teachers of a true gospel who are in error about some other things. But a false teacher or false prophet teaches other than the true gospel and thus damns men.

Their goal...what is their goal? Well it tells us what it isn't in verse 5, the goal of the commandment. The objective not only of God's commandment, but also of Paul's commandment to Timothy to do this work is to produce love. God wants to produce love. That's why the Bible says that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and the second is like unto it, to love your neighbor as yourself. What God wants to produce in us through salvation is that we should love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and love everyone else as we love ourselves. The goal of the commandment of God as well as the goal of Paul's command to Timothy within the church is to create a fellowship of people who supremely love God and each other. And he says that that love rises and gives us three tremendous insights out of a pure heart, a good conscience and faith unfeigned. A pure heart is a heart that's been cleansed by God...a heart that's been washed by the blood of Christ. It's the heart that David cried for in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew within me a right spirit."

In Psalm 24, the psalmist says, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and pure heart." The only people who come into the presence of God are those whose hearts have been cleansed. And we said last time that the heart is just another word for the center of personhood. It's another word for the core of life. It's where your personality is and your character and your mind and your thinking and your believing. It's equal in the Bible to your mind. And that has to be cleaned and cleansed.

And so, the goal of ministry is pure hearts, isn't it? But that wasn't the goal of these men. These men were defiled. In fact I think when verse...when in verse 9 and 10 he talks about all these sins, he probably has them in mind because it's for sure that if you have the wrong gospel, if you have the wrong means of salvation, you're not doing anything for your defiled heart. A pure heart is the first goal. And that can only come through the pure gospel purifying the heart. And where you have a pure heart then, you will have also a good conscience potential. If the heart has been cleansed, then the conscience which basically is your selfjudging faculty, that's a definition of conscience. It is your selfjudging faculty. It's what either excuses you and affirms you or condemns you and accuses you. It either says you've done wrong or that was good. It's that little part of you when you do something right that gives you satisfaction, pleasure, peace and joy. When you do something wrong, it condemns you. And if your heart is pure, then your conscience can be good because what would be there to condemn you has been covered in the blood of Jesus Christ. A good conscience produces pleasure, satisfaction, a state of well being, freedom of the feelings of guilt, joy, peace.

And the conscience...listen carefully...can only respond to the mind. That's why in Titus 1:15 he says of the unbelievers, "They are defiled, even their mind and conscience is defiled," they go together. If the mind is defiled, the conscience will respond by recognizing the defilement. If the mind is pure, if the heart is pure, the conscience will stop accusing and bring peace and joy. And the result of that will be faith unfeigned. That is faith without hypocrisy. You don't need to pretend to be something if you've got nothing to pretend. People who pretend their faith, people who want to wear a mask of

religiosity, people who are phony are phony because the truth is so bad. They're playing a game that isn't genuine. But if you're genuine, you don't need to play the game. You faith can be without hypocrisy if your conscience isn't accusing you because your heart is pure.

I think we've overlooked that verse too much in evangelical teaching. That's an incredible thing. If you want to know what the heart and soul of Christian growth and development and ministry is all about, it is all about bringing people to the place where through Jesus Christ their hearts are purged so that they have a good conscience, the conscience stops accusing them. Their faith being genuine then can be paraded as the genuine faith that it is, not some hypocrisy. And out of that pure heart, good conscience, genuine faith will come the love that is the goal and the end product of all that God desires to do in and through us.

And we could spend much time developing those themes, but you understand what he's saying. The goal of sound teaching is love. Love for God. Love of choice, as I said. Love of will. Love of selfsacrificing giving to God and to others. And that only comes from a pure heart, comes from a good conscience, comes from a genuine faith without hypocrisy. So those are the goals of true and proper ministry.

But, verse 6, "These have swerved and turned aside from that unto empty talk." Their goal is wrong. Their teaching is wrong because it's the wrong gospel. Their goal is wrong because it's the wrong objective. What is their objective? Filthy lucre...they want to get rich, they want money...they want money. They're in it for what they can get, they want to make merchandise out of their subjects. That's the goal of false teachers. And everything they do destroys the possibility of a pure heart. They're defiled. Their message is defiled. The doctrine they teach, chapter 4 says, is the doctrine of demons that comes from seducing spirits. And they have departed from the faith. Well, you're not going to have a pure heart if you depart from the faith, listen to seducing spirits, and teach doctrines of demons. They couldn't possibly have a good conscience because verse 2 of chapter 4 says, "Their consciences are seared with a hot iron, their consciences are scarred, cauterized." Nor do they have unfeigned faith because verse 2 says they speak lies in hypocrisy. So chapter 4 verses 1 and 2 is a direct contrast to the right and proper goals of verse 5.

In chapter 1, "These lying hypocrites, these impure defiled men with a defiled conscience have turned from the right goal of love and they've made their own goal their own pleasure and their own gain." Look at their goal, I wish we had time to go through the whole New Testament and see how he seem always whoever the Bible writer is, the Holy Spirit through him seems always to pinpoint the characteristic bottom line goal of false teachers as to amass to themselves people and money for their own gain. The motives are all wrong. And of course their teaching brings the opposite of love for God and love for fellow man because it's all built on love for self...love for self.

The third thing, and where we would like you to look for a moment in verse 7, is to understand their motives. What's behind this? What's their motive? What are they really after? They have a strong motive, by the way, they have a strong desire. But it isn't the right desire. Verse 7 says, "Desiring to be teachers of the law," and we'll stop at that point.

They have a consuming desire to be law teachers, to be law teachers. That's their desire. You say, "Is something wrong with that?" Yes...they don't know what they're talking about, the rest of the verse says, they don't know what they're being dogmatic about. They don't understand the law of God. They want to be teachers. It isn't that they want to know the law. It isn't that they want to know

God. It isn't that they care about the people. It is that they want the prestige of being recognized as a teacher of the law. They were seeking a rabbinic office. They were in the church wanting the prestige and the prominence and all the baggage that went with the rabbi in the Jewish culture. They wanted that. They weren't content with teaching people the truth, they wanted like Diotrephes the preeminence. They wanted, like it says in Matthew chapter 23 when Jesus indicts the Pharisees, they wanted the chief seats. They love, he says in verse 6, the upper most places at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplace and they love to be called rabbi, rabbi, teacher, teacher. It was all preeminence. They wanted to wear those fancy robes and that ecclesiastical garb and they sought that prominence and preeminence. They wanted the applause of men. They wanted to collect the offering. They wanted to be teachers.

This is just the opposite of a true motive. James 3:1 says, "Stop being so many teachers for theirs is the greater condemnation." The one who really understands the role of teacher understands that it's not a place for proud people. These were proud people. Chapter 6 verse 3 says that they do not consent the wholesome words, even the words of Jesus. And verse 4 says they're proud. They were proud, that was the issue. The opposite of the character of a true teacher.

For example, when Patricia and I were in Scotland some years ago, I had the privilege of preaching in many of the Scottish Presbyterian churches. Each of them has in the church what is called the "John Knox Pulpit." The John Knox Pulpit is the pulpit from which only the preacher preaches. At the time appointed, you go through curtains and you stand there and then you preach in this pulpit. It's named for that great man of God who brought revival to Scotland, who would no doubt be in grief were he here now to listen to what is preached from most of those pulpits named for him.

But I have been interested in the past to read about John Knox to find out what it was about his life that made him such a marvelous servant of God. And one of the things that has stayed in my mind through the years is a comment by his biographer to this effect, he says this, "When John Knox was called forth to preach the gospel, he burst out in most abundant tears and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behavior from that day until he was compelled to set himself in the public place of preaching did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his soul," end quote.

The whole idea of preaching the gospel was so serious and so overwhelming that he was in a state of despair and tears until the very hour he was compelled the first time to preach.

Martyn LloydJones whose life has been a great inspiration to me and whose books and biography I have read said that teaching the Word is such an awesome task that a godly man, quote: "Shrinks from it, nothing but the overwhelming sense of being called and compulsioned should ever lead anyone to preach," end quote.

The deep sense of unworthiness and fear of such an awesome responsibility is the potential for true usefulness. William Taylor, writing in his book, The Preacher and His Model, tells the story of selfsacrifice that makes the point. It is a legend that there was Chinese potter who was ordered to produce a great work for the emperor and he tried to make it but he wasn't successful. At length and driven to total despair, he threw himself into the furnace with the pot that he was trying to make and the effect of his selfemulation on the pottery which was in the fire was that it came out to be the most beautiful piece of porcelain ever known.

Now what's the point of the legend? Well, William Taylor says in the Christian ministry it is selfsacrifice that gives real excellence and glory to our work. When self in us disappears and only Christ is seen, then will be our highest success alike in our own lives and in the moving of our fellow men. We get near to the secret of Paul's greatness when we hear him say, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope that Christ shall be magnified in my body whether it be by life or by death. And the measure in which we imbibe His Spirit, we shall rise to His efficiency," end quote.

And John Stott put it this way, "I can not help wondering if this may not be why there are so few preachers whom God is using today. There are plenty of popular preachers but not many powerful ones who preach in the power of the Spirit. Is it because the cost of such preaching is too great? It seem that the only preaching God honors through which His wisdom and power are expressed is the preaching of a man who is willing in himself to be both a weakling and a fool. God not only chooses weak and foolish people to save, but weak and foolish preachers through whom to save them, or at least preachers who are content to be weak and seem foolish in the eyes of the world. And we are not always willing to pay that price. We are constantly tempted to covet a reputation as men of learning or men of influence, to seek honor in academic circles and compromise our oldfashioned message in order to do so and to cultivate personal charm or forcefulness as to sway the people committed to our care," end quote.

It takes humility to be a servant of God and the compulsion of the call of God. These men knew neither of those things. These men sought an office for the sake of its own preeminence. And by their subtle novelties and their distorted allegories and by their strict Judaistic legalism and their selfdenying asceticism, they wanted to be exalted as lawteachers, nomos didaskalos, a Jewish term referencing the idea of teaching the Mosaic Law like a rabbi would. It was nothing but an ego trip. They were seeking prominence. They wanted the prestige of a rabbinic role and they were imposing Judaistic apostasy, the heresy of salvation by works. And they were the authorities who would bring it to the people. And so we have to understand their motive was wrong. They weren't men in humility compelled to preach, they were men in pride seeking preeminence.

The fourth and final thing that Paul wanted Timothy and us to understand is their effect...their effect. And this is a very strong point. Verse 7 says, "First of all, these who desire to be teachers don't understand what they say nor that about which they affirm." The word "affirm" could be "speak dogmatically" and you'd get the idea. They not only were saying things that they didn't understand, but they were saying them dogmatically as if they were absolute truth. They were ignorant and they were proud of it. They were parading their ignorance and being dogmatic. The idea of understanding neither what they say in the verb form is a present active participle, they were continually in a state of not understanding of what they were talking about. As a general rule they could be defined as ignoramuses. They had no idea of what they were talking about.

And there are so many many like that even today who pretend to be teachers of the law and if you listen and know the Word of God, you know they have no idea of what they're talking about. But they pass themselves off as those who teach the Word of God.

Furthermore, these people continually and confidently affirm or assert with dogmatism, that's what diabebaioomaimeans, they're very dogmatic about their ignorance.

Now the point is to remember not what heresy they taught, that isn't even given to us. But to remember that they must be understood for what they do. They're so ignorant. So he says they

want to be teachers of the law but they don't understand anything about it.

And then quickly almost as a reaction, Paul wants to defend the law because the tragedy, you see, of a false teacher is that in his mouth is the Word of God perverted. And unless you're careful when you throw away the false teacher, you can wind up losing confidence in the Word that he's spoken. Some of the Word that he spoke may have been true when the Scripture was truly represented. The point is you don't want to throw the baby out with the dirty bath water...obviously.

So Paul hastens immediately to say in verse 8, "We know that the law is good, and by condemning one who wants to be a teacher of the law we're not condemning the law." We can condemn that motive and we can condemn that abysmal ignorance of the law and we can condemn that stupid dogmatism that asserts things it doesn't even realize aren't true...and I tell you, I hear that so often today...people speaking dogmatically about things they are absolutely in ignorance of. But he hurries to say, "We do not say then that the law is no good, the law is good if the law is used rightly or lawfully." The law has a right use. It has a right place but they're not using it right. They're using it as a means of salvation. They're setting the standard up of salvation by the law. And that is always what appeals to men who are proud because they're proud...or their pride is manifest in the illusion that their good enough by themselves to please God, that's the epitome of pride. Pride says I don't need a Savior. Why do I need a Savior? I can attain unto God's standardy by myself.

So, their pride had caused them to create an approach to the law of God, and I believe when he talks about wanting them to be teachers of...they wanted to be teachers of the law, he has in mind the Mosaic Law, the law of God. But he says they don't know anything about it but the law is good if you use it right. They were using it wrong. They were feeling you could be saved by the law. That's always what the false teachers teach, that you don't need saving grace. You don't need the death of Christ. You don't need to come in meekness and humility and fear and brokenness before God. You can get there on your own, you can attain to it. And they misuse the law. They think the law is the standard by which men reach their salvation. That's wrong. He says the law is good if you use it lawfully. Well, how do you use it lawfully? Verse 9, "You have to know this, that the law is not made for a righteous man." And literally it says in the Greek, "That law," it's an artheris(?) without the definite article, "That law in general and certainly encompasses the Mosaic Law, law is not made for righteous men." That's obvious. "Law is made to condemn...what?...sinners."

You see, you can't...the law is good but you can't treat it like gospel. Listen carefully, the law is good but the law alone is not good news. Did you get that? The law is good but the law alone is not good news. The law alone is bad news because Romans 3:19 and 20 says, "Every mouth is stopped when brought before the law of God and the whole world guilty before God and by the deeds of the flesh will no flesh be justified in His sight." So what the law does is condemn everybody. What the law does is pronounce judgment damnation on everybody. What the law does is send everybody to hell because we've broken God's law and there's none righteous, no not one. There's none that understands, no not one. There's none that fulfills God's standard, nobody. The Jews thought they did but in Romans 10 Paul says the reason they thought they did was they were ignorant of God's righteousness. And they went about to establish their own righteousness. The point is, they thought God was less righteous than He was, they thought they were more righteous than they were so they met. That was a lie. They were ignorant of how righteous God really is.

Law is not for people who are righteous but this is what was going on. They were parading around as if they were righteous keepers of the law. The law isn't for the righteous. In fact, as long as you

think you're righteous, you're not going to be ever saved. You're never going to see the true use of the law because the law is not for righteous people, the law is for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjered persons and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. That's what the law is for. The law is to crush sinners, the law is to show who we really are. The law is good but the law is not good news. The law is good but it's not gospel...not alone, it wasn't made for righteous men, it was made for sinners so they could see their sin.

And to demonstrate that, Paul lifts all those definitions of sinners that I just read to you. The first group, and he really gets his cues here out of the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20, because he runs right through the Ten Commandments. And the first three pairs, lawlessdisobedientungodly sinners unholy profane, those are pairs. And they all refer to the first part of the Ten Commandments which has to do with our relationship to God. The idea that we don't have any other gods before us, that we worship the true God, that we make no graven images, that we remember that He is the only one to be adored and worshipped and all of that. Those refer to that.

Starting them with the murderers of fathers and mothers and manslayers and fornicators and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars, he moves through the second half of the Ten Commandments which have to do with our relationship to other men in society.

Well let me show you just briefly what these mean because I don't think his intention is for us to stop and digress on all these. But you need to know this, these first three couplets that deal basically with the first half of the Ten Commandments are put together with a negative and a positive result. The first negative is lawless, the positive result is disobedience. Someone who is lawless, that is someone who has no commitment to any law, someone who has no standard, is going to be insubordinate. If you don't believe in the law, you're not going to pay any attention. So the lawless are disobedient. The negative is they are lawless, the positive effect is they are disobedient.

The next negative is they are ungodly...they are irreverent. They are without regard for anything that is sacred. They don't care at all about God or about what is true of God or what is right. And because they are ungodly, that leads to the positive effect of being sinners. The ungodly then go out and commit sin. They live without any regard for God because they don't have any regard for God. So that's how they live.

The third negative is ungodly...I'm sorry, unholy. And unholy basically means indifferent to what is right. They're indifferent to God, indifferent to the duty that they are to render to God. And because they are indifferent to their duty, they turn out to be profane, <u>bebelos</u>, that is they trample on what is sacred.

So, you have a person who is lawless and you'll have disobedience. You have a person who is ungodly and you'll have sinfulness. You have a person who is unholy and you'll have a life of trampling on everything that is sacred. We could summarize by saying then that the law was made for people who are disobedient, impure and irreverent.

What for? To show them they were. When you put your life against the law of God, you see that you

are indeed lawless disobedient ungodly sinful and unholy and profane. And all of that has to do with the defying of God and the duty one has to render to God. It is a sinner attacking God.

Then Paul...then Paul..yes, moves to the second table of the Ten Commandments dealing with men's relationship to men. And he starts out with the fifth commandment, alluding to it when he says, the fifth commandment says, "Honor your father and mother," and so forth. He says here, the law is made for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers and murderers period...homicidal people. Well, first of all, this involves the fifth commandment which says honor your parents. The fifth commandment is broadened in the next chapter, Exodus 21 verse 15, to talk about the fact that even if a person only hits their parent, if you strike your parent you're to receive the death penalty. So that fifth commandment is in view there. The law was made for people who break the fifth commandment by not honoring their parents...all the way from dishonor to murder and everything in between is encompassed in that fifth commandment to which Paul alludes.

And then the word manslayers, which is the word for homicide, literally means murderer, not manslaughter which we use to refer to accidental death, but murderer refers to the sixth commandment which is, "Thou shalt not murder." And then the law, in verse 10, is also made for fornicators, sexual sinners, and homosexuals, arsenokoites, the word koitel(?) comes from the back part of that word and it is two words in the Greek, male and marriage bed...males in the marriage bed. Now there can't be any misunderstanding of what he's talking about. Male, koitel, homosexuality is a violation of the seventh commandment of God which is the commandment of sexual purity which allows no sexual relationship out of the marriage of one man and one woman. And the law was written to expose those people as vile condemned sinners.

And then the eighth commandment has to do with stealing. And in light of stealing he mentions kidnappers because in his day one of the most prominent ways that men showed their depravity in stealing was in stealing children. Stealing children was a common problem because they were in need of slaves and children were easy prey to steal, take away and use as slaves. In Exodus 21:16, Deuteronomy 24:7 gives the ultimate penalty for those who do that under the law of God.

Then he mentions the liars and perjurers that are also referred to in the ninth commandment. You can see then that he's moving right through the commandments. And he's saying the law is made for those people to show them their evil, to show them they were violating the law of God. And you get the idea that behind this is this lingering at...thought that he's probably giving this whole list because these are the things that are characteristic of these false teachers. Believe me, we go right back to Matthew 7, a false teacher talks good but lives bad. And if the truth were exposed about their life, if you could pull back the backward collar and the ecclesiastical garb, or if you could get behind the associations or the biblical lingo or the religious talk and really see the stuff that was there, you'd probably see some of these things right here. I'm always appalled when these kinds of things manifest themselves in people that we have believed for a long time to be the servants of God.

Just recently received a phone call, a church had two pastors of...a senior pastor, an assistant pastor...and the congregation found out that both of them have been having affairs with different women through the church for a long time...fornicators. Well, the fruit was made manifest. I don't know what kind of facade they wore, I know they came to the Shepherds Conference here a couple of times, and were upset that they couldn't get as much personal time from us to bring up some issues that they were concerned about as they...as they wanted and they were unduly demanding.

And I remember our impression was that their attitude didn't demonstrate what we thought would be the attitude of a man of God. Nonetheless we accepted what we could see at face value, and now the truth is known. So that's not an uncommon situation...sad to say, sad to say.

And it may well have been that what Paul is saying in this list is more than just a list out of the Ten Commandments, it may be because it does take the Ten Commandments and sort of direct them in a specific area, it may well be that that specific area had something to do with the leaders of that church. It could have been that some of them had killed their parents. It could have been that some of them had stolen children to be slaves. It could have been that some of them are homosexuals. It could have been that some of them were liars who had perjured themselves and so forth and so on. And he says that's what the law is for. And he may be indicting them in a rather sort of subtle way but indicting them. And he says just in case anything is left out, any other thing contrary to sound doctrine the law comes to expose. Nothing wrong with the law.

Paul says in Romans 7, "I'm glad for the law because when the law came I saw my sin." Do you remember that? In Romans chapter 7 he says, "Is the law sin?" Verse 7, "Is the law sin? No, no, no, he says, I had not known sin but by the law." Right? Romans 7 verse 7. "I had not known coveting unless the law said don't covet. Apart from the law," he says in verse 8, "sin is dead. But when the law came, sin became alive and then I died. And so the commandment was death to me. Sin through the commandment slew me."

You say, "That's bad." No, in the next verse, verse 12, "So the law is holy, the commandment is holy and just and good." And later on he says, "And I delight in the law of God after the inward man." No, the law is good because the law is the first part of the gospel. The law comes and says you're a sinner and you need to know that because the second part of the gospel is there is a Savior.

So, Paul says the law comes for sinner and he lists all these and then somebody might say, "Well, I'm going to...I'm not in that list, I'm okay." So he just says, "And any other thing contrary to sound doctrine." It's the word...sound is an interesting word, <u>hugianino</u>, we get our word hygienic from it, it means healthy, wholesome, promoting life and health. And the kind of teaching Paul advocates is the kind that produces spiritual life and spiritual growth and spiritual health. So he says the law is to expose and condemn and crush the sinner. And then he lists a few kinds of sinners and throws everybody in as any other thing contrary to healthy lifepromoting teaching.

This fits, verse 11 says, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which is committed to my trust. What does he mean by that? What he's saying is that this definition of the law is part of the gospel. This definition of the law is according to the gospel. What is the gospel? The gospel goes like this...man is a sinner, a sinner of such depth and profundity that he cannot redeem himself but Jesus Christ came into the world, God in human flesh, died on the cross, was raised the third day for our justification and by faith in Him and the grace of God we can be forgiven of our sin...that is the gospel. So, to rightly define the law is part of the gospel. That's why he then says, "This is according to the glorious gospel." The good news, first of all, is bad. That is the gospel. The gospel says that man is a sinner. The first part of the gospel is that you are lost without Christ with unforgiven sin for which you will be damned forever in an eternal hell.

So when somebody comes along and covers up the message of sin, that's not any help. The law...you don't want to hide the law. People say, "Well, we don't want to talk about that." We have to talk about that. That's the gospel. That's according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Now

if you have a better message than the glorious gospel of the blessed God, then you must have some kind of problem in really understanding who you are. This is God's glorious gospel. And I'm always amazed that the people who want to emasculate the law part of the gospel, they want to strip out the sin part of the gospel, because they think they have a better gospel than the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Glorious? That is to say the gospel demonstrates His glory.

Listen, part...God's glory is His attributes. And part of His attributes are a hatred of sin, right? Part of His attributes are wrath and judgment and condemnation and holiness. And if you strip all that other stuff out and make God into a benign Santa Claus, that's not the glorious God...that's not the glorious gospel. He doesn't reveal Himself...you have to see His holy hatred of sin, you have to see His condemning justice because that's part of His essential being. And then you understand His grace and mercy and love as well.

So, it is called the glorious gospel because it is the gospel through which God's glory is revealed. The wonderful gospel...you start with the law that damns men to sin..to hell, and you end up with the glory of the Christian in forgiveness and everything in there is a revelation of God's attributes. You see His attributes of wrath and judgment and righteousness and holiness, condemnation, hatred against sin and all that, and you see His wisdom and you see His love and you see His mercy and you see His grace and His power. All that God is comes together to be revealed in the gospel, that's why it is the gospel of His glory, the gospel revealing His glory or the essence of who He is. And who is He? He is the blessed God. What does he mean by that? It doesn't mean that He's the God we bless, it means that He's the God who is the source of blessing. He is blessed in His own person.

In chapter 6 verse 15, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says that He is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is blessed, not in the sense that we bless God, but in the sense that He inherently is blessed. He has essential blessedness, essential happiness, essential perfection which He then can manifest to us. Paul says this is the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust, which was given to me. And he didn't receive it, Galatians 2:7 says, from men but from Christ Himself. And he wanted to be a faithful steward of it, 1 Corinthians 4:1 and 2, he wanted to be a faithful servant to give out the mysteries that God had given him. Chapter 9 of 1 Corinthians, he says, "Woe is unto me if I don't preach this gospel." He says in Romans 1, "I'm a debtor to preach it, I'm ready to preach it, I'm not ashamed to preach it." See, he was under a divine commission from the Damascus Road on.

So, he says...Look, the effect of these men is to preach a message that is not according to sound doctrine and not according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. So we can't allow this.

Listen carefully, in closing, now how are we going to be able to watch for this because we need to be on the alert? Every one of us has this responsibility in the church. What do you look for?

Let me go back to these four things and note them very carefully in your mind. When you want to listen carefully to find out if someone might be a false teacher, first of all listen for their understanding of the Scripture, to see if there may be error there. Is it sound? Is it biblical? Is it legitimate? Don't look at their personality. Don't look at the religious trappings that are around them. Don't necessarily look at their associations...although that may tell you some things if the associations are negative. But listen to what they say. And do what 1 John 4 says, test them against the revelation of God.

What is their approach to Scripture? Are they into all kinds of things beyond the Scripture? Are they saying things that don't...you don't find verses for...though they sound good?

Secondly, what is their objective, or goal? Is it spiritual? Do you see them as people whose primary goal in life is to produce a group of people who consummately love God? Or do they seem to go after self love? Self aggrandizement? Possessiveness? Materialism? Personal happiness? What is their objective? Is it love for God and for everyone else? Or is it an appeal to personal glory, personal gain? Is their objective holiness? A pure heart? Does that come ringing through the message, the purity of the heart, good conscience, faith without hypocrisy? Does it ring with a genuineness?

Thirdly, what about their motives? Do they demonstrate a selfless motive? Can you see in them humility and meekness and selflessness? Or does it appear along the way that while they're helping people they are getting very wealthy? Very prosperous? And are manifesting surpassing attitudes of selfindulgence at the expense of the people supposedly to whom they minister?

And what about their effect? What about their effect? Do their followers understand clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ? Do they understand the right use of law and the right definition of the glorious gospel of the blessed God? Do they really understand that?

I remember speaking at a luncheon of a Christian organization. They call themselves a Christian organization. I think some of the people in it might be. And some might not...some are not, I know this man wasn't. Anyway, a man came to me afterwards and said, "Well, you know, I listened to what you said." And he said, "I've been in this organization nine years and this is how I think it is. I think there's this big door and what you need to do is climb up these steps, and it's a long long climb and you get to the top and you bang on the door and you give them your name and you hope they let you in." He said, "That's what I think."

I said, "How long have you been in this organization?"

"Nine years."

I said, "May I be so bold as to suggest to you that you're not a Christian?" And he was pretty well shaken by that. I said, "You're not a Christian. You don't understand the gospel."

Nobody ever said that to him before. Too bad nobody ever said that, right? Because of the trappings and the surroundings, everybody makes the assumption. What's the...what is the effect of this? There are people, I believe, in Christian churches and organizations across the world who aren't Christians, you know that. But I don't want it to be our responsibility not to tell them or our responsibility not to have told them when we should have.

So you have the test...look for their error in doctrine. Look for the objectives and the goals of their ministry. Check their motives out. Take a look at their followers and see what the effect is. And you'll understand the urgency with which we have to deal with false teachers. Let's bow in prayer.

Thank You, Father, for our time in Your Word this morning. We would...we would rejoice if we could just rest in the joys of the Christian life and not even talk about things like this that distress us and

upset us and concern us but this is the way it is, this is war. And we are soldiers. And there is an enemy and he is aggressive and he is supernatural and he is brilliant and powerful. And we are weak and desperately in need of Your strength. Help us, Lord, to hold fast the true Word. Help us to live godly lives. Help us to recognize the false and confront them that their mouths may be stopped for they subvert whole houses. Help us to speak the truth. And, Lord, use us and our church because we are committed to the two things which are so on the heart of Paul, sound doctrine and holy living for Christ's sake. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).