Delivered to Satan, Part 2
1 Timothy 1:20
54-10

Let's open our Bibles as we look together to the Word of God at 1 Timothy chapter 1. First Timothy chapter 1. The message that the Spirit of God brings to us today is a very strong word, one that I believe has far-reaching implications and one by no means which I can begin to fully embrace in the hour we have together. But I want you to listen very carefully because it's not a message often heard but one desperately needed.

First Timothy chapter 1, we're studying 1 Timothy, we are now in the last three verses of chapter 1. The text says, beginning at verse 18, "This command I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which pointed to thee that thou by them mightest war a noble warfare; holding faith and a good conscience which some having put away have made shipwreck concerning the faith; of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."

In our study of this passage, as we are expositing 1 Timothy, we have been noting all three verses, but for last Lord's day and today, we are focusing in one phrase in verse 20: delivered unto Satan. A fearful thought, a terrifying reality, but one that the church must understand. Satan, the enemy of God, the hater of good, liar, murderer, demon, leader of demonic forces, despiser of Christ, hellish fiend who lives to destroy all that God designs and will be consigned ultimately to the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever, Satan, that maker of perverts, that maker of madmen and criminals, devastator of families, creator of chaos, to be turned over to him is indeed a terrifying thought.

Now, I mentioned last time we studied this that in order to be turned over to Satan, we must assume that prior to that, one was not fully under his control. Let me explain that a little further. All unredeemed humanity are fallen in sin, and the Scripture tells us in 1 John 5:19 that the whole world lies in the lap of the wicked one. Furthermore, Romans 1:18-32 says that because man has fallen into sin, God has given him up. It says it again, God has given him up. And a third time, God gave him over to a reprobate mind to work all forms of evil.

What that says is that God has abandoned the human race in sin to the power of Satan. That is why Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 2 says that all unredeemed people who are dead in trespasses and sins walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air who is called the spirit of disobedience who works in them. The whole unredeemed human race lies in Satan's power.

Who, then, are those that are turned over to Satan? They must be those who have found some haven from that. And indeed, we saw last time, those who are a part of the redeemed community, even if they're unbelievers who outwardly associate, have found in that association a kind of protection. First Corinthians 7 says an unbelieving wife is sanctified by a believing husband, a

believing wife sanctifies an unbelieving husband, and children are sanctified in a home where there is a believing parent. In other words, to be identified at all with a redeemed community, even if it's only outward, is to find a haven away from the full fury of the blasts of Satan. For in the church, as God pours out His blessing on the truly redeemed, it splashes on some of the unredeemed who find themselves in proximity to those who belong to God.

To be turned over to Satan, then, is to take that believer or that unbeliever who is in the family of the redeemed, at least outwardly, and push them out into the full fury of Satan's world. And that's what we're talking about. Some people, by God's design, by His sovereign purpose and as a holy act for His own intention and Will, are thrust out of the protected place of the church into the Satanic dimension. And we're learning about that.

Paul instructs Timothy in this first chapter that he's going to have to do that with certain people in the church at Ephesus where he is now located. Paul says, "I set the example" – in verse 20 – "because I took Hymenaeus and Alexander and I put them out, I delivered them over to Satan that they might be literally, physically trained or physically punished for their blasphemy."

Now, that's the pattern for what I want you to do. The church is a wonderful haven, a place of protection for believers. It is even a place where unbelievers can come and find a certain amount of haven from the fury of Satan. But also, the Scripture is very clear that for God's own purposes, there are times and there are people who are thrown out into Satan's domain.

Now, let me just remind you of what we said last week. Sometimes the Lord turns a true believer over to Satan for a positive reason tied to His own sovereignty. And we saw that in illustration in the life of Job. Job was not just a good man, he was the best of men, an upright man who honored God with everything in his life, a righteous man, a God-loving, God- fearing man. And yet it tells us in the book of Job that he was delivered over to Satan and Satan was allowed to destroy all of his possessions, to destroy all of his family, and even to bring about terrible illness on his own body. And Job never really understood why this happened. Even at the end of the book, he wasn't sure specifically why God brought it other than the fact that God had revealed Himself in it to be a sovereign God. But as we look back at the book of Job, we understand why Job was delivered to Satan: for God to make the point that true love to Him and true faith in Him is not dependent on circumstances. Job sums it up when he says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him," when he says, "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The great truth of the book of Job is that whether or not you possess the blessings of this life or you are stripped absolutely naked of everything, true faith in God and true love for Him stands because it is not based on what we have received by way of blessing, it is based on who He is as a worthy God. So Job was a tool used by God, delivered to Satan for God to make a great truth clear.

Then Christ was our second illustration of one delivered over to Satan. He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted of the devil, it says in Matthew 4. Literally, the Holy Spirit led Him into Satan's temptation that He might be proven to be perfect and that by victory over Satan in the moment of His weakness after 40 days of fasting might demonstrate His power over Satan, that even in His weakest moment He was a match and more than a match for Satan; which is to say that if He was victorious in that temptation, He will ultimately be victorious in the glory of His second coming when Satan is bound forever in hell. So Christ was turned over to Satan also in order that He might demonstrate His perfection and His ultimate power over the enemy.

In 2 Corinthians 12, we saw our third illustration who was Paul. Paul was delivered over to Satan, given a messenger of Satan, a thorn in the flesh, and he said, “I glory in that” or “I rejoice in that,” “I boast in that because in my weakness, His strength is perfected.” So Paul was turned over to Satan with limitation, as all of these are. You remember Job was turned over to Satan but God set limits. There were limits set in terms of Christ. There were limits set in terms of Paul. But in order for Paul’s case, that he might be humble and dependent, he was given a messenger from Satan.

Then we saw Peter. And Peter also, Jesus said to him in Luke 22:31, “Satan desires to have you that he may sift you like wheat.” Perhaps Satan had come to God like he did with Job and said, “I want Peter. I’ll show you what kind of a guy he is. I’ll strip him naked.” Maybe he gave the little bit of the same speech regarding Job, and so Peter was turned over to Satan, not because he had committed some willful sin or lived in some defiant, rebellious attitude, but Jesus said, “When you have come back, strengthen the brethren.” And we learned in that that Peter was turned over to Satan in order that he might be able to strengthen others who would go through severe trouble.

So in those cases of Job and Christ and Paul and Peter, there was a positive purpose in the sovereign plan of God. I was reading also this week about those who will suffer in the great Tribulation. In Matthew chapter 24 in verses 21 and 22, it talks about those who will suffer during the Tribulation, right before the second coming of Christ. In Revelation 6, it shows them crying out because they’ve been killed in that Tribulation. There will be believers deprived of food, deprived of water, deprived of a job, deprived of their lives during the Tribulation when Satan wreaks havoc all over the globe.

But when you come to those same redeemed saints in chapter 7 of Revelation, it shows them having come out of the Tribulation, having had their robes washed, having been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, and it says they are day and night forever before the throne of God praising and serving Him. And I believe what it’s saying is that there will be a whole generation of believers literally turned over to Satan’s fury unleashed in the Tribulation so that when they are delivered out of that, they will have a level of praise to God that may exceed all other redeemed generations. So God ultimately, then, will receive praise from those who have suffered much because their deliverance is so great, so glorious.

I want you to turn to Revelation chapter 2 for a moment, and verse 9 and 10, the message to the church at Smyrna, to the angel of the church in Smyrna write – verse 8 – these things, says the first and the last who was dead and is alive, that’s Christ. And Christ says, “I know your works, tribulation, poverty, but you’re rich.” “I know what you’ve been through, you’ve been through tribulation, you’ve been through poverty, I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews and are not but are the synagogue of Satan, false teachers.” “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold” – now look at this – “the devil shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tried and you shall have tribulation ten days, that is a brief period of time, be faithful unto death and I’ll give you a crown of life.”

Listen, in that little church in Smyrna, there were believers who were persecuted for the faith. They were persecuted by the devil unto death. God let the devil kill them and then rewarded them with a crown of life. God desires to reward His children and rewards most nobly those who willingly give their life in persecution.

Yes, we've seen from all of these illustrations that true believers, the best of believers, leaders like Job and Paul and Peter and congregations as the church at Smyrna and those who will come in the Tribulation can be turned over to Satan for God's sovereign purposes, for the sake of proving the genuineness and the character of saving faith, for the sake of keeping them humble and dependent on God, for the sake of enabling them to strengthen others who go through trials, for the purpose of praise throughout eternity because they've been delivered from so much and for the purpose of giving to them special eternal reward. Yes, believers can be delivered to Satan for physical problems, for problems in the family, even for death for divine purposes.

But today I want to talk about another aspect of it: being delivered to Satan not for a positive reason but for a negative one because this is the issue in 1 Timothy chapter 1. These two men, Hymenaeus and Alexander, were delivered unto Satan not in order that they might prove the truth of their faith, not in order that they might maintain humility and dependence, not so that they could strengthen others, not so that they could receive a crown of life, not so that they could give unlimited and unhindered and eternal praise to the living Christ who had spared them and brought them through a terrible tribulation. No, they were turned over to Satan for judgment. That's different, for judgment. And the Scripture illustrates this very aptly.

Let's go back to 1 Samuel chapter 16, and I'm going to show you several illustrations of this as we move through briefly. First Samuel chapter 16, Samuel comes to anoint the one God has chosen to be the new king. We pick up the narrative in verse 12. Samuel has arrived at the household of Jesse. God has pinpointed one of Jesse's sons. He sent and brought him in. He was ruddy and of a beautiful countenance and handsome. The idea was he was masculine and he was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, this is he." Samuel took the horn of oil, anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day onward.

Now, here was the anointing of David, the son of Jesse, to be the king of Israel to replace Saul. Saul had had the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord. That's not a commentary on his personal salvation or on his spirituality. The Spirit of the Lord came on David here for the role of king, just as the Spirit of the Lord had come in Judges 16 on Samson as the judge of Israel. This is for the governing of the people so that God's will would be worked out. It is not a matter of commenting on the spirituality either of Saul or David. The Spirit of the Lord had been on Saul for the reason that he was king and in order for God to carry out His Will through that king. Verse 14 says that. "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul." Now, if it had to do with his personal salvation, it would be something altogether different. But the point is when the Spirit came on David, the Spirit left Saul because the coming and going of the Holy Spirit in reference to these two men had to do with their function as king of Israel so that God's will would be effected through their ruling.

Now, notice verse 14: "When the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." People get worried about how the evil spirit could come from the Lord. It doesn't mean the Lord is evil. It doesn't mean the evil spirit dwelled in the presence of the Lord. All it means is that even the demons can't function unless the Lord allows them. And when the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, it's as if God turned him over to Satan. And Satan dispatched some very key powerful demon who went and became the constant companion of Saul. And the word "troubled," that common Old Testament word means to terrify or torment. He became demon tormented. The word "demon possessed" is not a biblical term. It's better to use a biblical term so we understand what we're talking about in reference to passages of Scripture. Saul became demon tormented –

demon tormented.

In spite of having the Spirit of the Lord on him for his kingly rule, he was given to rash judgments. His decisions made under pressure were stupid. One of them almost caused him to have to execute his own son for eating honey. He fell to pride. He despised the authority of Samuel and wanted unilateral control and wanted full confidence and trust and glory from all the people rather than sharing it with anyone. He was greedy. He flaunted his injustice everywhere. He flagrantly disobeyed God. He took the role of a priest and he tried to hide his disobedience under a cloak of spirituality. He was a very wicked, very evil man.

As a result of this, the Spirit of the Lord left him, and an evil spirit came to terrorize that man until his death. In chapter 18, we get a little insight into this. And David was wherever Saul was. David was the one who played the harp for Saul, you know the story. And Saul set him over men of war and lifted him up to a place of prominence, and they won a great battle, the slaughter of the Philistines mentioned in verse 6. And as they were coming back, women came out of all the cities of Israel as they marched back toward Jerusalem, and they were dancing and singing and timbrels and joy and instruments of music. And the women spoke one to another as they played and this is the song they sang, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

Now, an egomaniac like Saul is never going to be able to handle that. And Saul was very angry. The saying displeased him and he said, “They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, to me they have ascribed but thousands, and what can he have more but the kingdom?” Now, he’d been anointed but he’d not yet taken the throne. And Saul was in great fear, and he watched enviously David from that day and onward. And it came to pass on the next day, the evil spirit from God came on Saul. He was terrorized again. He prophesied in the midst of the house, apparently, some ecstatic utterances. And David played with his hand to try to soothe him as at other times. And there was a javelin in Saul’s hand. He was a great warrior, a giant of a man, skilled with a javelin. And Saul threw the javelin and said, “I’ll smite David even to the wall with it, I’ll pin him to the wall.” And David escaped from his presence twice. And over in chapter 19 verse 9, the evil spirit from the Lord was on Saul as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand. And David played with his hand and Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin, but he slipped away out of Saul’s presence. He smote the javelin into the wall and David fled and escaped that night.

Now, this man is demon terrorized. The story of Saul the tormented man goes from bad to worse. When that demon was given to him and he was turned over to Satan, even though he’d been under the Spirit of the Lord, even though he’d been part of the covenant people of God and known the insulation of that, whether or not he was actually a true believer, he had known the protection of the covenant people. He had known the protection that comes from being within the framework where God is pouring out the fulfillment of His promises. He had known the presence of the Spirit of the Lord as a king. But he is now thrust out. The Spirit of the Lord departs, and he’s all alone, abandoned to the kingdom of Satan. And he becomes not just melancholy, not just despairing, this isn’t some psychological disorientation, he is demonized and he is subject to the control of a supernatural evil power, vile and wicked, who leads him to insanity, to mass murder, into the occult, and ultimately to commit suicide. And as Thomas Manton, the Puritan, said, “The devil delights to vex men with unreasonable terrors. The devil both tempts and troubles.”

The Lord turned him over to hellish power, not for instruction in divine sovereignty, not for him to be able to maintain his humility – he had none – not to make him dependent, not to help him strengthen

others, not to give him a crown of life, not to cause him to praise for all eternity, but to punish him, to judge him. And he went right into the pit of the occult. He then consulted with the witch of Endor, delving with mediums and demon spirits. And when the Lord did come back in the form of the Spirit in chapter 19 and cause him to prophesy, he was so out of control in the prophecy that he stripped himself naked, fell on the floor prostrate and totally exposed in total humiliation. Really, in a sense, bereft of his own understanding. Later on, he massacred a whole group of good priests because they had given provisions to David and then ended his life as a suicide – which, by the way, is a rare act in all the annals of Israel's history but not rare among those who are delivered to Satan.

Let's look at John 13. John 13, verse 27. It is the Upper Room, it is the night of the betrayal of Jesus Christ. The main character of our focus is Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Judas, who had been with Jesus for three years. Judas, who had seen everything He did, heard everything He said, watched the miracles. Judas, who could not deny either the truthfulness of Christ – Judas, who could not deny either the perfection of Christ nor the power of Christ, has rejected it all. And it says in verse 27, one of the most tragic statements in Scriptures: "After the sop" – that is, after taking that piece of bread and dipping it in the sop, which was part of the Passover meal – "Satan entered into him." The divine timetable was set, and God turned Judas over to Satan.

He had been a part of the community of apostles. He had been insulated from the full fury of Satan's world because of the protection of that group, which God had so blessed by the presence of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. But now he is out of that group. He is turned over to Satan. Satan enters into him. Jesus says, "What you do, do it quickly." "Do it quickly." And in Luke chapter 22 and verse 3, the text puts it this way, just to add to the understanding you already have: "Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Him with them. They were glad and covenanted to give him money."

He went out, energized by Satan, sold Jesus Christ, then went out in remorse, put a noose around his neck, hanged himself. The rope broke or the branch broke, he fell down, hit a rock, and his bowels gushed out all over the place. Suicide, just like Saul. Turned over to Satan, put out of that sheltered, protected place. Saul, I believe, illustrates the unbeliever who is blessed by being in the presence of God's promised people. Judas, the same. But cast out as a judgment on their evil hearts.

Let's go to Acts chapter 5. Acts chapter 5. There was a certain man in verse 1 named Ananias who had a wife named Sapphira. They sold a possession. Obviously, they promised the Lord they would give Him all of the proceeds from the sale, 100 percent. But they kept back part of the price. So they told a lie to the Holy Spirit. They came, then, pretending to be giving everything, laid it at the apostle's feet. The Holy Spirit instructed Peter about their lie. So Peter said to Ananias, "Why" – here it comes – "has Satan filled your heart?" When he lied to the Spirit of God, it was a result of an evil intent, which literally turned him over to Satan.

Now, I believe there's no reason to assume this isn't a believer. After all, it was the Holy Spirit to whom he lied and only a believer has such communion with the Holy Spirit. He lied to the Holy Spirit. The result – verse 5 – he fell down and died. I believe the Lord turned him over to Satan, Satan filled him, and Satan killed him. His wife showed up three hours later, didn't know what happened. She came in, the same story went on. Verse 9: "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of God" or "the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them who have buried your husband are at the

door and will carry you out. She fell down immediately at his feet and died. The young men came in, found her dead, carried her forth, buried her by her husband. Great fear came on everyone."

Now, here were two believers who lied to the Holy Spirit. They were turned over to Satan. Satan is the one, according to Hebrews 2, who has the power of death. There are times when God turns people over for Satan to use that power. And in that case, that's what happened. Turned over to him because of sin. In the case of Judas, an unbeliever, in the case of Saul, likely an unbeliever, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, believers, turned over to Satan for a chastening. You say, "Did they go to hell?" No, they went to heaven if they were true believers, but the judgment was nonetheless exceedingly severe and caused others to have great fear.

So there are those within the protected community who can be turned over to Satan not for the sake of teaching some great truth, not for the sake of maintaining humility, not for the sake of strengthening others, not for the sake of gaining reward, not for the sake of eternal praise, but for the sake of judgment.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 5. First Corinthians chapter 5 and a familiar passage. "It's reported commonly," verse 1 says. "This is common knowledge" – everybody knows it. Paul says, "I've heard it not from one source but from many sources. There is fornication" – that's the word porneia, from which we get pornography. "There's fornication among you." This is a church, folks, this is the church at Corinth who prided themselves, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ." Those who thought they were kings, those who thought they knew all the answers. This is a church. And "fornication is among you and the kind of fornication that isn't even discussed among the pagans."

What kind of fornication is that? Incest, that one would have his father's wife. Now, there are a couple of things you need to know about this. The fact that the word "fornication" is used rather than "adultery" leads us to believe that it could mean something out of marriage, so that what may have happened here is the father's wife indicates a stepmother; otherwise, he would have used the word "mother," having sex with your mother. But "father's wife" puts it probably in the category of a stepmother. And the word "fornication" can take it out of marriage, so what may have happened was a son starts a sexual relationship with his stepmother, it ends in divorce, and the relationship is carried on as a fornication outside marriage after the divorce. That's a real possibility. It may well be that the woman wasn't even in the church.

But instead of the church doing something about this incestuous relationship that perhaps had caused a divorce and may have been going on with an unregenerate woman, all of these things, instead of them doing something about it, verse 2 says: "You're proud about it, you're puffed up, and you haven't even been sorry about it. You should have taken away the one that has done this deed from among you." Should have excommunicated them. To put it simply, you should have turned them over to Satan. Put them out of the church, don't let them enjoy the protection of the church. You say, "Is this a believer?" I think it is, as we shall see.

Paul says in verse 3, "I verily as absent in body but present in spirit have judged already as though I were present concerning him that has done this deed." "I'm not there but I know what ought to be done. I'm not there but I know exactly how this person ought to be treated. I've made my judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan." What does he mean? Put him out. Here's the

only other place the terms of 1 Timothy 1:20 are used. Turn him over to Satan. Which means put him out of the church. Don't let him enjoy the protection of the church.

In the words of Matthew 18, "You've gone through the disciplinary process of going to him, two or three going to him, the church going to him, now treat him like a pagan and a tax collector, like an outsider, put him out." The instruction comes to mind also in 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly." Verse 14: "If they don't obey the word of this epistle, note the man and have no company with him, put him out, turn him over to Satan." That's what church discipline is when it runs to its limit. That's why we at the communion service, when we gather together, as it says in verse 4, when we gather together as we will tonight in communion, if there's discipline to be done, it's done there. We put them out.

But I have noticed through my own ministry that there are some people we don't even know about that the Lord puts out. And I often wonder why people disappear and don't show up for long periods of time. And then I hear about the tragedy of the way their life is going, a messed up marriage, immorality, drunkenness, and all these kinds of things, and I realize that what we didn't know, God knew, and what we couldn't purge, God did.

"Put them out," he says. "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? You can't have that in the church. Purge it out." And then down in verses 9 and 10 he says, "I'm telling you not to company with those people, with fornicators and covetous and extortioners and idolaters." "And I'm not talking about the worldly ones, I'm talking about the ones that are called a brother who are fornicators and covetous and idolaters and railers and drunkards and extortioners. Don't even eat with them."

End of verse 13: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person," turn them over to Satan. Now, back to verse 5. "When you deliver them over to Satan it is for the destruction of the flesh." Did you get that? It is for the destruction of the flesh. What does that mean? Oh, it can mean a lot of things. Heart attack, cancer – I've seen that – venereal disease, AIDS, it could mean adultery in a marriage, it could mean the destruction of a home, it could mean the illness of a family member. Listen, what was it for Job to be turned over to Satan? All of those things. Could mean the loss of a job, the loss of your career. When you're turned over to Satan, there is no way to project what might happen. But I think we overlook the reality that that goes on a lot more than we are willing to admit. And we may chalk up diseases and disasters to a lot of other things when they belong in this category right here. The destruction of the flesh.

Notice the destruction is limited. It was limited on Job and it was limited on Paul and it was limited on Peter and it's limited here. Satan can destroy his flesh, but his spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. That's why I believe you have a Christian here and also the reference to a brother in verse 11. You can't destroy a soul that belongs to God, but you can sure devastate his physical world, his physical life. It can happen.

You don't want to be turned over to Satan as a chastening. I want to show you another passage that speaks to this, Revelation chapter 2. This is a church. This is a church, the church at the city of Thyatira in Asia Minor. And in writing to the church, the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I know your works" – verse 19 – "your love, your service, your faith, your patience, your works in the last to be more than the first, you're a very busy church, very active church, but I have a few things against you. Here they are: You allowed that woman Jezebel" – and it may not be a woman literally named Jezebel, but a

Jezebel type, an idolatrous God-hating woman – “who calls herself a prophetess to teach and seduce My servants to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed unto idols.”

This woman came along, led that church into immorality and false doctrine. And He says, “I gave her and her followers, of course, space to repent of her fornication and she repented not.” Immorality and false doctrine. “Because there was no repentance, I will throw her into a bed” – implication: All right, if she wants to be in bed, I’ll throw her in a bed, all right – I’ll throw her in a bed with Satan, that’s what I’ll do – “and all them that commit adultery with her, and that bed will be a bed of great tribulation unless they repent of their deeds, and I will kill her children with death. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts and I’ll give unto every one of you according to your works, but unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira” – watch this – “as many as do not have this doctrine” – they don’t follow Jezebel – “and who have not known the depths of Satan.” He contrasts those true believers and obedient believers from the ones thrown in the bed of trouble and fornication who have known the depths of Satan. He literally plunged them into the depths of Satan. What a phrase; what a phrase. Think of it – turned over to Satan.

Now, we need to be very cautious. You that are unbelievers in the church who just come for whatever benefit you can gain are in danger of being turned over to Satan for eternal judgment. Those of us who are believers, by cultivating disobedience or false doctrine or immorality, are in danger of being turned over to Satan for chastening, which can result in all kinds of physical devastation, the disasters that are indicated in all these texts, as well as death itself. You see, Peter said the devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may – what? – devour, swallow, consume. And when you’re turned over to Satan, you’re turned over to his consuming power.

Now, remember, what is Paul saying? Let’s go back to 1 Timothy, and I think we have it in perspective now. What is he saying here when he says, “I have delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander unto Satan?” Most likely, they were not believers because they had corrupted the gospel. And he delivered them that they might learn the consequence of blasphemy. Now, we don’t know whether it meant they would die or whether it meant some disease or the devastation of their possessions or the loss of everything they had. Whatever devastation Satan wanted to bring within God’s allowance would come.

But Paul is saying, “Look, Timothy, you have to fight a battle in leadership in the church. Remember what we said first of all? You have a responsibility and accountability to the church,” verse 18. “You have a responsibility and accountability to the Lord” – verse 19 – “to hold faith and a pure conscience. And now you have a responsibility and accountability to deal with the enemy. And I’ve given you the example. What I did to them, you’re to do the rest of those who corrupt the church with false doctrine and unholiness.”

Now let’s look at verse 19 and see what he says about them. He calls them “some” – “some.” They’re the same as the “certain ones” of verses 3, 6, and 7. They were some pastors at the church at Ephesus and perhaps surrounding churches who were teaching falsely. But these pastors “which some” – “which” refers to a good conscience – “were not interested in a pure conscience.” What did I tell you? Bad theology always rises out of bad morals. A man’s doctrine is always an accommodation to his morality. And when people reject the truth of the Word of God, they do it because they want to substitute a system which accommodates their desire for sin. So there are some who have no interest in a good conscience. They’re not at all interested in that.

In fact, “which some having put away” – have put away. That word apōtheō, a very strong word, means to violently reject. It means to discard aggressively. They don’t want anything to do with it. They don’t want a pure conscience. They don’t want to live for holiness. They don’t want to live for purity. They want to live for their own lust, their own success, their own gratification. As a result, when they throw away a good conscience, they shipwreck the faith. It’s like throwing away the rudder; you’re at the mercy of the wind and the sea. They confess to be Christians and pastors and teachers of God’s law but with no interest in purity, no commitment to holiness. They are literally devoid of any truth. They shipwreck the truth because truth does not rise out of an immoral heart.

No, an evil conscience and error always go together. In 2 Timothy 2, we find a note that should be compared with this. It says their word, these kinds of people, eats like gangrene. It kills, of whom are Hymenaeus, here he’s mentioned again and this time another fellow, Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred – have erred. And then in verse 19 it says, “Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” So we see error and iniquity again. These men have erred, don’t you err, so depart from iniquity. The foundation out of which error comes, the soil out of which error grows, is the soil of unholiness. So these men were not interested in a good conscience; they were interested in evil, and so they threw the rudder away, which is the conscience that gives guidance, and they were at the mercy of the wind and the sea, and they shipwrecked the faith.

It names them for all time. Hymenaeus, who is also mentioned, as I read in 2 Timothy 2:17, we don’t know anything about him, he’s just mentioned twice. The other one is Alexander. There is an Alexander mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14-15. There is an Alexander mentioned in Acts 19:33-34. There is no reason to believe they are the same because the name was as common as the name John is today – a very, very common name. What we have here, then, are two pastors, self-righteous egotists who wanted to be prominent teachers of the law but didn’t know anything about what they were speaking of, substituting myths and genealogies and fables and human reason for God’s revelation and living ugly, ungodly lives.

And Paul says, “I put them out. And that’s the pattern, Timothy. If you’re going to be a good soldier in the noble warfare, you understand your obligation to the church, you understand your obligation to the Lord, and you understand your obligation to deal with the enemy.” Now, when he says, “Whom I have delivered unto Satan,” he means “I put them out of the church. I put them out. I put those sinning people away from the protection and insulation of God’s people. I put them in the domain of the devil, away from the influences of all that is good and godly.” Why? That they may learn that you can’t blaspheme and get away with it. And the word “learn,” paideuō, is to train through punishment – to train through punishment. It’s a very significant word. It is used in Luke 23 verses 16 and 22, it’s translated “chastise,” and it speaks about the scourgings that were given Christ. It is to train or to punish someone with the afflicting of physical blows.

In 2 Corinthians 11, you know that familiar passage, Paul talks about – 1 Corinthians 11, rather, the communion service and how some were weak and sickly and some slept. And he says when we are judged, when the Lord takes our life, when he lets the devil kill us or make us sick, we are chastened of the Lord. That’s that same word. We are trained through suffering, just like you have to train a child with physical pain. And that’s what is going to happen to these people. That word is used repeatedly in the New Testament to speak of training through punishment, training through suffering. It’s used in 2 Corinthians 6:9, it says, “As chastened and yet not killed.” In other words, we get beat around physically, although short of death, again indicating its use that way. In Hebrews 12, it’s used in verse 6, 7, and 10. When the Lord chastens, He chastens through punishment, suffering.

Now, the point is this: You cannot see this word “that they may learn” without understanding that it carries the idea of physically inflicted punishment. I don’t know what disease they got, I don’t know what disaster came into their life, I don’t know whether it meant their death, but they were turned over to Satan to be punished as a lesson that you can’t blaspheme – a lesson to them and a lesson to everybody else. “Blaspheme” means to slander God, to ridicule God. To blaspheme the worthy name by which you’re called, James 2:7 says. In the last days, 2 Timothy 3:2 says, there will be blasphemers. But blasphemers, those who ridicule God, who slander God, are in grave danger.

Now, you say, “What do you mean by that?” Anything that you do that disobeys God is blasphemy. Anything you say that speaks evil against God is blasphemy. And any blasphemy needs discipline. And you or I or anyone who does something against the Will and the purpose of God, who acts in an unholy way, who slanders God’s character, slanders God’s person, or who denies or disobeys God’s Word is a blasphemer to one degree or another and therefore susceptible to having to be taught through physically inflicted punishment such lessons as might be necessary to call us away from that.

So there are those who by God’s sovereign design are turned over to Satan, and God has a positive purpose in mind. There are those who, under the sovereignty of God and by the direction of the church, are turned over to Satan, and God has a negative in mind: the inflicting of severe punishment for the sake of ultimate, final, and eternal judgment or for the sake of temporal chastisement. In either case, they might learn the consequence of blasphemy. And blasphemy – I say it again – is any disobedience or any slander or rejection of the person and Will of God.

Several things to remember, then, as we sum it up. To be delivered to Satan may be for God’s sake, like Job, for God’s sake, for God to make His point. It may be for my own sake, like Paul, that I may maintain humility and dependence. It may be for others’ sake, like Peter, that I might be able to instruct others. It may be for the sake of God’s desire to reward and give a crown of life. It may be to produce great praise when such is over. But on the other hand, it may be for chastening’s sake, like in the case of an incestuous brother in Corinth, or Ananias and Sapphira. It may be for chastening’s sake unto death, as in the case of the church at Thyatira, committing fornication and listening to false doctrine. It may be also for final judgment’s sake, such as in the case of Saul or Judas or Hymenaeus and Alexander.

Now, what is the remedy? What is – how do you avoid the chastening part and the judgment part? By receiving the truth and the holiness of God in Christ. And that’s really the message. All of that was to lead to this. It may be that God wants to turn me over to Satan. It may be that for His own purposes, He wants me to suffer some inflicted wound from Satan to one degree or another, in one way or another in my life. My only prayer is that it will be for His glory and my good and the strengthening and advancing of His Kingdom, not for punishment and not for chastening. And that if it need be that I have to suffer some messenger of Satan, if I have, like Peter, to be turned over for a period of time, I can only pray that out of it God will gain the greater glory and I’ll be a more faithful servant, and that makes it a welcome turning over if that’s God’s design, as opposed to being turned over to be physically punished for blasphemy. So as believers, we seek to avoid that by the pursuit of a holy life. Let’s bow in prayer.

Lord God, we come with hearts that have literally been stirred because of what the Word has spoken to us today. We know we’re in a great supernatural warfare, and we know that as Christians, we

belong to You, and however you choose to use us as Your soldiers, we want to be used. Whatever loss there might need to be in order that there can be greater gain, we can accept. But Lord, we seek not to be chastened, to be turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh because of evildoing, because of blasphemy against You, because we have rejected the holy life to which You've called us and for which You have empowered us in Your Spirit. So Lord God, call us to obedience and effect that in us by the power of the Spirit. Draw us away from the world and the subtle sins which appear to us to be not sins at all but are blasphemies against You. Show those to us, those secret faults, those presumptuous sins of which the psalmist wrote, that we might know Your hand of blessing in whatever may come. We want to have the wider view, and that is to see the spiritual conflict and to be a part of it in whatever way we can for Your glory. Keep us from fighting poorly and help us to fight a noble war, realizing our responsibility and accountability to the church as those who are called and commissioned and confirmed for service, realizing our responsibility to You to hold the faith and a pure conscience, and realizing our responsibility to deal with the enemy that the church might maintain its purity. Father, help us to find that evil in our own hearts, find that evil that is among us, and Lord, what we can't find, would You find and remove that we may be a testimony to Your glory. And I would pray also, Lord, for any in this congregation this morning who are already turned over to Satan, who are already suffering at his hand. If it be for a positive reason, Lord, give them great faith and strength in it, build them up, make them more useful. And Lord, if it be in a chastening way, may they repent, may they turn from their sin that they may be recovered from the devil. If it be that they are on the brink of eternal judgment in the hands of Satan, O God, may it be that they embrace the Savior before it is too late.

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