

8/27/23 - 1 Timothy 1:1-11 - "To Thine Own Self, Be Dead"

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[0 : 00] 1 Timothy chapter 1, verses 1 to 11. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by command of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my true child in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus, so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

Now we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

That is the word of the Lord. Amen. Amen. There's a saying that goes like this.

[1 : 51] If you were awake in English class or interested in theater, you will probably know. And I'll fill you in after I say it. To thine own self be true.

I see some heads nodding. This is the famous quote from Act 1, Scene 3 of Shakespeare's Hamlet. And this is spoken by King Claudius' chief minister to his son as a part of his speech to his son regarding advice as he goes to university.

He says, To thine own self be true. It's an anchoring truth and phrase that resists change.

That nothing around you is going to change you. Right? That nothing around you can change your behavior. And to act in a way that is outside of what you really want to do is just simply not possible to be true to yourself.

It's a phrase that's marked by self-rule. In our day today, this phrase is probably along the lines of the fastest growing religion in America.

[3 : 19] Eighty-four percent of Americans believe that enjoying yourself is the highest goal in life. Ninety-one percent of Americans affirm to find yourself, look within yourself, according to a Barna study in 2021.

Sounds like something out of The Lion King, doesn't it? Simba. Well, this secular religion lies beneath many of the hot-button topics of finding yourself, defining your truth, and many social problems in the world, political issues stemming from legalizing abortion to legalizing gay marriage. It's expected in the world, though, right? It's expected in the world. But the greatest danger is when secular convictions are embraced and adopted within the church or promoted on Christian bookshelves to enjoy yourself, to find yourself, or look within yourself.

For similar reason and issues, Paul sent Timothy to sort things out in Ephesus for him on behalf of Paul.

1 Timothy is actually Paul's second letter to the church in Ephesus, the first being the letter to Ephesus. You guessed it. And so, the Ephesians, the book of Ephesians, which you all know.

[4 : 59] And some believe that this letter is sort of like a private note to Timothy, just between Paul and Timothy, which tends to reduce its imperatives to being relevant for our world today, that it was

just for Timothy back then in his situations.

But do the imperatives matter? Do the imperatives apply to today? Well, as we walk through Scripture and this particular literature, especially genre, with such practical implications for how the church ought to organize, we must ask, why did Paul write this letter?

We have to figure that out. And fortunately, Paul doesn't leave Timothy guessing too much, and he doesn't leave us guessing either. All you have to do is look at chapter 3, verse 14 and 15.

It says, I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that if I delay, that you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth, or pillar and support of the truth.

In other words, Paul is saying, if I get hit by a truck on the road to my next missionary journey, here's how you conduct yourself.

[6 : 42] Here's how to figure things out. Right? Pay attention to the instructions. So in order for us to successfully embrace the imperatives being true and applicable for us today in our church today, we must realize that it is unique in a few different spheres.

This letter is unique in its personal nature. It's between the Apostle Paul and a young minister, Timothy. But that's not only it. It's also pastoral between a church planter and his church.

There is plural in this letter addressing people other than Timothy, and we'll get into that within its context. But it's also general in a sense because it regards principles for our lives.

It's transcendent to be looked at for all times. And so there's a lot of hot-button issues, and I'm just going to call out some elephants in the room as we're probably made very well aware.

I was made aware on the phone this week about hot-button issues that this letter has divided evangelical Christians today. Issues from the identity, the specific identity of the false teachers and their teachings that are being referred to here.

[8 : 07] From the act of being handed over to Satan. What's that mean? Well, we'll figure it out. There's been led to different atonement theories, to teaching of the role of women in the church, to what it means for a woman to be saved by childbearing.

That's an interesting one. Or leadership qualifications being two roles of the church, the office of elder and the office of deacon.

Or what does it mean to give double honor to those who rule well? Does that mean if somebody doesn't rule well, you just kick them out with double humiliation? All of which, these hot-button issues, call them elephants in the room as we go through the next couple months, they will be dealt with in their proper context, but always within the context of Paul's purpose of writing this book.

In 1 Timothy 3, 14 through 15, is an anchoring purpose of this writing. For this, I'm excited to walk through this letter to expose its relevance in our world today and supreme rule over our lives to abide in and to submit to.

This is God's Word. It's authoritative. It's good. It's sufficient. It's transcendent.

[9 : 29] It's applicable for all times. And so today's titled message is to thine own self be dead.

See what I did there. To thine own self be dead. And I considered doing one main point, one point in this sermon because Rick did four last week as I heard.

So we want to make our points balance out so that our checks and balances are equal at the end of the month. I'm just kidding. People are like, man, this is a weird church here.

I thought they were Baptist, but they're like really Baptist. No. There is one main point, but I'm going to break it out in three thematic sections. There we go.

That's what you wanted to hear. So we're going to have three thematic sections as we go in. And thank you, Rick, for holding the pulpit down. And it was a great Sunday of rest with our family.

[10 : 37] Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, you have displayed your wisdom, your power, and goodness in all your works, and have revealed your will in the Scripture of truth.

Father, show us today that truth. You have caused it to be preserved, translated, published, multiplied, so that all people may possess it and find you in it, find Christ in it.

Let us find that today. And all God's people say, Amen. Amen. So the first thematic section leading to the main point is the essence of Christian purpose.

The essence of Christian purpose. We see this in Paul's writing. He says in verse 1, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. Spoiler alert, Paul wrote this letter.

There you go. On to the next. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope. To Timothy, my true child in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God

the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

[12:13] I love how Paul just breaks these boundaries. He takes a Jewish phrase of blessing, you know, grace and peace, you know, cheris and shalom.

And he adds Elios, mercy, in the middle just making that Christian. It's awesome. I love Paul's writing. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Right off the get-go, there's authority established in this letter. And the whole reason he's identifying his authority is to have you pay attention to what's being said.

Not only as we in our day address letters that are important, like, Paul is basically making his, he's putting his little signature. If you're within any specialized industry, you get your stamp, you know, like by the state of Ohio, you get a stamp on that.

He's literally putting a stamp of authority that this letter holds weight. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, he's called by Jesus, by the command of God, our Savior, and our hope, saying, listen up.

[13:32] This is a stamp of authority. Regardless of any maybe modern-day apostles that may show up at your doorstep, Paul was actually qualified. Right?

He was an eyewitness of the risen Christ. He was sent directly by Him. Now, many today believe that they had a dream and many cults develop out of those dreams and we must be sure that we're cautious with adopting that as a succession in the church.

Paul's authority was real. Authority. Authority that holds the foundation of the church of which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone.

This is a foundation that is being led by this apostolic authority. Who's it to? A true child.

Paul met Timothy back in Acts 16 on his second missionary trip and Paul took Timothy under his wing. Took him to Thessalonica, 1 Thessalonians 3, took him to Corinth.

[14:49] That would have been an interesting trip. In 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and even Jerusalem in Acts chapter 20. He was imprisoned with Paul in Philippians 2 and he's mentioned as kind of being this companion in six of the New Testament books.

Paul and Timothy had a close relationship and for that Paul addresses him as a true child. While he says my true child, he didn't attribute his belonging to himself because he was a true child in the faith.

He wasn't a true child of Paul. Paul was important in his life but not as important as his faith defines his identity.

You see, Timothy was a young man probably in his 30s at this point in the book. He's proven to be faithful. Paul's true child in the faith, grace, peace, and modifying it with that Christian blessing, mercy.

Grace, mercy, and peace. Take a pause. What an introduction. I don't know what grabs your attention in letters. It's hard to read text these days, you know.

[16:17] You always want the picture books. We speak in emojis in our days. We speak in memes. How has this happened? We are straying far, church.

It just took words on a page to grab attention, not a funny office meme. And it affirmed a commissioning by Paul being no ordinary man to Timothy, no ordinary child.

God. We're reminded in this short section of the essence of Christian purpose and belonging and identity.

Notice the adjective of all the identity in this passage. Paul. Who's Paul? An apostle. An apostle of who?

Jesus Christ. By what? Command of who? God. Who's God? Our Savior. Anyone else?

[17:22] Christ, Jesus. Who's that? Our hope. In verse one. Well, who's it to? To Timothy. Who's he? My true child. In what?

The faith. Grace, mercy, and peace from God. Who's God? From the Father. Who's that? Anyone else? Jesus Christ.

Who's that? Our Lord. Notice the adjectives of identifiers. It's all rooted in something outside of who they truly are.

It's been bestowed upon them. All who are called and called to be in life is directly related to the life of Jesus Christ.

You and me. Everything that you are is directly attributed to the life of Jesus Christ.

[18:24] It's your identity. It's your adjective. Paul's apostleship was tied to the command of God, Savior, and hope. Timothy being a true child was directly linked to his faith.

And you see identity being the reinforcing factor of a purpose. Well, what is that purpose? Well, I'm glad you asked because there's verse 3.

So, some of us need reminders sometimes in the most distressing situations. Well, here, Timothy gets a reminder of who he is. Now, we're on to what you need to do.

Verse 3, as I charged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach, any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths of endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

We find Timothy, you've heard of Daniel in the lion's den? Well, this is Timothy in the lion's den. Paul called Timothy to remember the two-fold task in Ephesus.

[19 : 51] There's some issues going on. The first being to charge certain persons, meaning to, if anybody's been in military or understand military language, this charge had weight, had authority.

Charge them not to teach any different doctrines. and the other, nor to devote themselves to myths, to endless genealogies.

What's happening here in Ephesus? Well, they're thinking that the gospel needs an upgrade. The gospel needs an adjective.

It's become like Willy Wonka and the chocolate factory, a world of imagination. Ephesus was being led by imagination.

You might wonder what exactly is going on here, because there's not much detail, and there is speculation within that. There's the book of jubilees that was extra biblical, apocrypha at this time, book of Jubilee or the biblical antiquities of Philo.

[21 : 04] These are Old Testament rewrites of Genesis and expanding the genealogies and everything. It's basically giving the whole Old Testament a new revised version of a pharisaical view.

And so, what they were doing was saying, yeah, maybe we'll call this one the Passion Translation. That's exactly what they did. The names of these folks were not as important as what they were doing.

They're certain persons, but what are they doing? They are trading the stewardship from God that is faith for what? Speculations, myths, all this extra stuff, and leading people astray.

Acts 20, 29, 30, Paul warns the Ephesian elders, saying, I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock, and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them.

the wolves are there. It's truly, if lion den needs a modifier, maybe it's a wolf den.

[22 : 38] I don't know how many of you feel ill-equipped for the tasks that God has called you in life. It looks different in all of our phases in life.

Some of us are teachers to ruthless high schoolers. Some of us are working in sales. Some of us are cooking in a kitchen. Some of us are running IT businesses.

Some of us are out at military bases, holding down the forts. Sometimes we feel ill-equipped because of our age. We're either too old or we're too young.

It's hard to find that sweet spot. Usually you realize you were in that sweet spot after it's already passed, and then you continue doubting yourself because you're too old. Sometimes it's experience.

You haven't gone to school. You haven't memorized all those verses. Rick quotes the Old Testament like he's memorized it like all the scribes. And you're wondering like, wow, I can't do that.

[23 : 42] Some of you feel ill-equipped because of the knowledge that you think that you need to have for something, or maybe you're just mentally incapable of getting out of anxious anxiety to engage with others.

It's a plethora of things. But the only thing that will ground us is the essence of Christian purpose. That God is calling us.

He has given us an adjective. And guess what? He will keep us in our purpose in this life. Whatever that looks like. Even in the midst of tension and confrontation, you have to remember your adjective.

You see, when the clarity of the gospel is at stake, there is nothing else that really matters. Your reputation doesn't matter.

Your friend groups don't matter. Your likability, your followers on Instagram or Twitter or whatever else there is out there, does not matter.

[24 : 53] I falsely quoted Twitter. It's X now or something. Elon is changing the world. But Paul was calling Timothy to remain true to the task.

And I believe it serves as a reminder for us to stay true to the task of the gospel as well. No excuses. So for students starting YSU this year, maybe you're new with us, checking out churches, trying to find the least weird one.

Hopefully you found yourself in a lesser weird one. but you might be looking at your upcoming school year wondering how in the world am I going to stand my ground in the faith here?

I don't know everything. The Muslim students keep talking to me about all these things and I don't know what they're talking about. Or maybe anybody facing relational crisis in their lives whether being that in your family or maybe your own home or even the church remain true to the task of the gospel.

Maybe you're a parent who your kids have been incarcerated, your kids are just running for all the passions of the world and not remembering the God who loves them and are falling away from their faith.

[26 : 23] faith. It's hard to remain true to that task of the gospel. Or maybe you're simply just burnt out by the nine-to-five job, you feel like a hamster running in a hamster wheel, going nowhere, just doing a thing and then you die.

And then with Jesus the Bible says you go. But until you get there it's like man, remain true to the task of the gospel. If God calls you, God will keep you.

This matters. It matters, church. It matters because the gospel is always at stake if your adjective is in Christ.

Everything your life is revolved around will stem into different forms of expressing that purpose and identity. You have a time to preach the gospel with boldness, regardless of your education, experience, or anxiety.

It is yours in Christ. And so I believe the call of every Christian is our role in joining Timothy as a sibling in the Lord to defend it well and to stand for the gospel.

[27 : 36] Similar to that we have the essence of Christian love in verse 6. It continues, certain persons we hear by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion desiring to be teachers of the law without understanding either what they're saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

And yes, we live in a world where confidence outweighs conviction. There's people out there, believe it or not, that can probably buy your shoes for half of what they're worth and then sell it back to you for double the profits.

confidence. You don't believe me? There are guys out there that are very, very, very good. Confidence, but lacking that conviction.

See, confident assertions, as this passage says, or a statement that someone strongly believes in, or a forceful statement, they all stem from something being at stake, that conviction being at stake. So to a salesman, he's just concerned about money, normally. I'm not saying every salesman, because there are Christian salesmen that are doing things for the glory of God. Secular salesmen, we'll say, for money, or a secular politician.

[28 : 56] He's in it for the votes. He will sound confident, make confident assertions for the votes. But to the church, to the Christian, there's something at stake, and that is the unchanging message of the gospel.

These false teachers were drawing people away by confidence rooted in false motives. They wanted it their way.

They were being true to themselves. One commentator says, these characteristics make a timeless portrait of the false teacher. doctrinal subtleties, special interpretation, false claims of authority, controversy, dogmatism, all these ought to make God's people suspicious.

If we've got any Gen Z's, it should make us sus. Right? Young Timothy had his work cut out for him. Didn't he? No one likes to be told to do, especially by some young punk. Right? I'm a 36-year-old lead pastor.

[30 : 24] I know. It's difficult at times. But Timothy was to charge them, not to teach a different doctrine.

And you know what that sounds like, church? Sounds like conflict. If I were to take a poll and have you all really awkward in the church today and have you stand if you agreed, I'm not going to. You can let your guard down. But if we wanted to be honest of how many of us are conflict avoiders, I think a lot of us would probably stand up.

Majority in this room. I mean, I've had numbers of conversations from church members of somebody doing something against them and they just run it up the flagpole to the elders. And when they hear me, you should tell that person about what they did to you. But the sign of conflict brewing makes all discussions shut down and nothing gets resolved.

[31 : 46] This is the basis of church discipline. Half the steps of church discipline happen within these chairs where you simply have adult-to-adult conversation. Hey, what you did there hurt me.

I'm sorry. I forgive you. And we're back. We live in this facade, this Willy Wonka world of everyone just get along and just love each other.

But why has conflict become a matter of love and hate? Why? The charge for Timothy, I'm going to argue with you, was that of love.

And this is the essence of Christian love. We see the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart, not malicious, of a good conscience, not a bad one, and a sincere faith, not a fake one. conflict. So, conflict is the most loving act we can do. Why? Because the gospel is at stake if we don't.

[33 : 06] If we don't lean in to conflict when it's a gospel issue. You might ask why? Can we just get along?

Well, the goal of conflict seeks restoration, redemption, reconciliation. It is a gospel issue. And just as the conflict of our sin is met by the grace of God, that conflict was resolved in Jesus Christ.

And when we resolve our conflicts, even though we lean into them, we preach the gospel message of reconciliation. The charge for Timothy was that of love.

What I want you to see, church, is that we must always lean in when the gospel is at stake, as this is the essence of Christian love, of giving yourself for another, of outdoing one another in honor, of counting others greater than yourself.

Here we reach the essence of Christian love, but also of the Christian gospel. In verse 8 and 9, we see it kind of transition into a little bit more info of what is being taught.

[34 : 35] There are certain persons swerving, wandering in the vain discussions, creating myths, creating speculations, things. In verse 8, we see a little bit more substantive of what is going on.

Verse 8, now we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully. And understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just, but for the unjust.

And he goes into a list of vices. And then in verse 11, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. church, at the core of sound doctrine within the gospel is the law of God.

You cannot subtract the law of God from the gospel because the gospel will not be the gospel of good news. It will be the gospel of bad news.

A certain person in our day-to-day believes that we can unhitch from the Old Testament and the law. And there were also certain persons in Ephesus that believed that they can embellish it, that they need to upgrade it, that they were looking at the law and saying, man, I'm not doing too bad.

[35 : 52] Doing pretty good. I haven't killed anyone. I lied, but I didn't kill anyone. I mean, who could even look at the law of God, the Ten Commandments, and say, I'm doing a good job right here, this guy.

This is what Paul is saying in verse 8. The law is good if we use it lawfully, knowing it was not laid down for the just.

To show how righteous you are, it's to show how righteous God is. It's to show and reveal our sinful behavior in this list of vices in verse 9.

But what's at stake? If you remove the law from the gospel, you strip the power of the cross of Jesus Christ.

The blood, the suffering, the nails through real wrists and feet, you reduce it to meaningless.

[36 : 55] These teachers were obsessed in their speculations in Genesis. They developed some weird teachings about food, marriage, and sex, as you see.

But you see, teaching that is inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus Christ that results in love and genuine faith, not compromise, speculations, assertions, myths, and embellishment.

Church, when we look upon the law of God, we find pretty bad news. See, lawlessness and disobedience.

Look with me in verse 9. For the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their father and mothers, for murderers, for sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, the law of God exposes the problem of the human condition.

And if we expose the problem of the human condition, God illuminates the gospel of glory. You see, you cannot have the law without the gospel.

[38 : 20] You cannot have the gospel without the law. You have to use it lawfully. And the message Paul has been entrusted was the gospel of glory. The essence of this gospel looks upon the clear commandments of God and the law and points to our depravity.

The Old Testament makes the solution not being found in any man, any government, any legislation. The law moves us along the trajectory of the cross where Jesus Christ fulfilled the law for us, who died for us, who conquered death at His resurrection by our faith.

Jesus Christ bestows righteousness upon us. This is a gospel message that is incompatible with being true to ourselves, church.

trueness in our lives always comes by that which is outside of ourselves. See, being a true child of God, being a true child to His call to defend His truth and being true to the gospel of Jesus Christ, guys, we are called to be true to the right things.

and to be true to the gospel is to be dead to ourselves. Fast forward though a little bit, I've been heavy hitting on some falsehoods even in our day and I understand that and I'm aware of that.

[40 : 00] But I also don't want to swing on the other side of the pendulum. Because if you fast forward in the life of the Ephesians, of this church in Ephesus, Scripture reveals that the pendulum actually swung for them in an unfavorable direction where grace and truth became unbalanced.

Revelation 2 warmly commends the congregation for defending true doctrine. They started getting it right. Praise God for Timothy and the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

It says in Revelation 2, 2, you have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not and found them to be false.

It's a warm commendation for the congregation at Ephesus. But somewhere between verse 2 and verse 4, the Ephesians actually lost their way along true love.

They've lost true love. love. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

[41 : 22] We have to recognize, church, the call to balance this pendulum of theological liberalism where it's love without doctrine.

And we can't swing all the way to this end where there's doctrine without love. At the center of that pendulum is true doctrine, sound, healthy, theology, and it is founded upon the gospel of Jesus Christ, balanced between grace and truth.

And upon that we must defend. We must also remember it is not pharisaical to uphold sound doctrine. It is pharisaical to embellish it.

Beware of those things that are being sold on CBN of handbook prophecies of the end times or Catholicism's myths of purgatory and veneration of saints or worship of Mary or even new ageism of spiritual mysticism and things of that nature and even Pentecostalism that lends to extra-biblical revelation by modern-day apostles that seem to outweigh what the text plainly says.

Now, I love a good conspiracy theory, but I would never allow these little things and handouts from people and their tidbits to alter the course of my life that is so clear according to the Word of God, and neither should you.

[43 : 05] And I also love my Pentecostal friends, and that love sometimes does come with conflict, and conflict is good, and that is how I love my friends, and that's how my friends, you love me too as well.

And so, as we kind of wrap things up today, I went longer than I intended, but I believe that we have established the purpose, the mission, and the message that is rooted upon the whole counsel of God that says what is true and what is false, that says this is reality and this is imagination, this is life, and this is death.

Don't lose heart. As we see the world attempting to abandon the confines of the convictions of the law of God, we should expect the world to act like the world, right?

But we ought to be really concerned when the confines of that conviction of the law of God is abandoned within this church. That's where the gospel is at stake.

Because doing so abandons sound doctrine, and in doing so, of abandoning sound doctrine, it abandons the gospel of Jesus Christ, and guess what?

[44 : 28] The world goes without any hope. We just live in this fantasy land. On this we stand and defend. Salvation in Christ is the most essential plan of God that He accomplished for His people.

For that, we cast aside these distractions in this life, all distractions of wearisome, unproductive talk about these mysteries of Scripture.

No, we teach, study, and live out the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the Word alone, by the power of God alone. It is not time to make excuses for gospel compromises that govern our lives and find the silver lining.

No, it's a time for clarity in what truth is and what is false in our culture. The culture can try to define truth, all they want and what they will find.

It's more emptiness, more letdown, more lostness, more darkness. Church, what we have is a light of the gospel, and for that, we must stand clearly upon the gospel.

[45 : 50] Tolerance is always preceded in compromise, and a life-led intolerance will become desensitized to compromise. Let's do this well to be true, and to be true, to be dead to ourselves in purpose, in mission, and message.

This is God's Word. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray.