

THE WRONG USE OF THE LAW

1Ti 1.3-7

Wednesday, September 09, 2015

Emphasize what the church is...the church has lost its sense of identity...this is observed not only by the departure from God's Word but it is also seen by its fruit.

We have a profound challenge and opportunity before us:

- Only 28% of people ages 23-37 attend church, as opposed to 43%-52% for older generations.
- Of the **318 million** people in the US, approx. **188 million have no vital church connection.**
- 15,000 people per month convert to Islam in the U.S., this week we learned that 250,000 Muslims are immigrating each year.
- The U.S. has the **4th largest population of unreached people in the world, after India, China, and Malaysia.**

With about 350,000 evangelical churches in North America... consider these facts:

- For every new church that opens, **four close.**
- 85 % of all churches in America are either plateaued or are declining
- **Remaining 14 are growing by transfer** [we are simply stirring the saints around] from other churches. (Malphurs, page 32)

That means that only **1 out of 100 of the churches that claim to be "evangelical" are actually winning non-Christians to Christ.** We desperately need more "Great Commission" churches. (**Ephesians 4 Network**)

That is why this letter we are studying is relevant to us right now!!!

By the time Paul wrote 1Timothy to Ephesus, the church had become a PCA-type church, strong foundation from Paul, planted at least seven churches in the region, even had embraced correct theology, but internal problems were destroying the church.

As our nation quickly turns against Christ, as we see laws passed almost daily to remove any remains of the knowledge of God and Biblical morality is held in derision, we must awake and respond with clear minds and deliberate refocus on what makes the Biblical church what Jesus designed it to be.

1 Timothy 1:3-7 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**,⁴ nor to devote themselves to **myths** and endless **genealogies**, which promote **speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith**.⁵ The **aim** of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.⁶ **Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away** into vain discussion,⁷ **desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding** either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

EPHESUS BACKGROUND: Attacking the Gates of Hell through a Great Launch

The Church is called to faithfully teach God's Word. That means it is called to be counter-culture in its message. Here is the story of how this happened...

Act 18-20 detail powerful impact of the Gospel...faithfulness today is not guarantee of fidelity tomorrow. Paul is writing a letter on revitalization (distinguish difference from revival).

Strong Spiritual Warfare...then long-term decline natural physically and spiritually.

- *Artemis: Lewd worship practices. Goddess of nature: vegetation, animals and the family household, Sex goddess of fertility, helped women with childbirth, temple prostitutes, impact on religion, morals, families of the area.*
- *Powerful impact of evangelism.*
- *Discipleship through Paul: 2+ yrs of public instruction every day (11 – 4PM during heat of the day when people took time from manual labor.*
- *Much church planting*
- *Many dramatic miracles (handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul's skin healed the sick) and Exorcisms...Jewish syncretists tried to mimic Paul and demons beat them up, glorified name of Christ. Christianity wasn't magic. It was faith in the King Jesus.*
- *Scrolls of new believers burned in act of repentance: 50,000 silver coins = \$5 Million equivalent.*
- *Riot provoked by huge Artemis (Diana goddess) industry. Putting them out of business. (2+ hr riot). Theatre still there, held 20,000 + people!*

Evangelism and Church planting is always front-line ministry. **It involves attacking the very gates of hell.**

Matthew 16:12-18 ...¹⁸ "And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**"

A gate is not an offensive weapon, it is defensive. Jesus has called on us to be aggressive in the work of the church. The target is the very place where Satan wields his influence. The gates of Hell is a place of conflict. When you share the gospel with others you enter the area of Spiritual warfare and opposition. Satan

doesn't give up his property easily. Only a strong faith based on Christ will enable success. However, often the church that begins with this understanding and power will forget its foundations.

- **First evangelism**, apologetics, to establish the Truth and call to repentance.
- **Second it involved disciplemaking and leadership development** (Ac 20 summary)
- **Third it involved dealing with false teachers.**

PAUL SUMMARIZED HIS STRATEGY IN HIS FINAL ADDRESS TO THE ELDERS

- "Now from Miletus he sent to **Ephesus** and called the **elders** of the church to come to him." ¹⁸ "And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia," ¹⁹ "serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;" ²⁰ "**how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,**" ²¹ "**testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.**" (Acts 20:17-21)
- "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you," ²⁷ "for I did not shrink from declaring to you the **whole counsel of God.**" ²⁸ "**Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock**, in which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." ²⁹ "I know that **after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;**" ³⁰ "**and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.**" ³¹ "Therefore be alert, remembering that **for three years** I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with **tears.**" ³² "And now **I commend you to God and to the word of his grace**, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:26-32)

EPHESUS DECLINED THIRTEEN YEARS LATER: 1 TIMOTHY

Church established: AD 52-53
 Ephesian letter: AD 60-61 (9 yrs later)
 1Ti: AD65 (13 yrs later)
 Rev: AD 95-96 (42 yrs later)

13 years after the founding of the church, Paul wrote 1 Timothy to detail the necessity of revitalization and how to go about it. In it, he set priorities for a young minister, Timothy, in building leadership, practicing sound preaching, teaching strong doctrine, and ministering effectively.

- **LOOK FORWARD EVEN FURTHER: 42 YRS LATER:**
Revelation: Jesus spoke to the same church in the Revelation.

As Reeder observes, "Timothy's teaching had taken hold through sound doctrine, leadership development and church

discipline. This isn't a matter of technique or form. It is the guts of the church, (its) love. It isn't the institution". But again, something was lost...they got it right on the false teachers. What they lost was "heart"...

- ""To the angel of the church in **Ephesus** write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.'" ² ""**I know your works**, your toil and your patient endurance, and how **you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.**" ³ "I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary." ⁴ "But I have this against you, that you **have abandoned the love you had at first.**" ⁵ "**Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.** If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you **repent.**" ⁶ "Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." ⁷ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." (Revelation 2:1-7)

By the time Jesus sent the book of Revelation to Ephesus about 90AD, they had lost first love, slipped into decline spiritually. Call it burn out, wrong reaction of church discipline of removing false teachers. Stress of ministry in a hostile environment. The fire was gone. Going through the motions, correct theology, but lost the passion of love for God and others.

1 Timothy: An Apostolic Charge:

- (1 Tim. 1:3) 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,

This is given to **Timothy**. He is an **elder**.

- **This means that Elders** are to Lead boldly in God's Word. This charge **remains the responsibility of ordained church leadership to maintain doctrinal and practical purity in the local body.** When God gives a responsibility to exercise ministry, He also impart authority to carry it out (church discipline for the Glory of God and the health of the Body).
- **This also means that God expects the Body to follow the elders when they are faithful to the Bible.**

IT MATTERS WHO TEACHES WHAT IN THE CHURCH: STRONG PERSONALITIES

Just as your body cannot long tolerate internally the presence of disease and dangerous germs without the loss of health and strength, neither can the Body of

Christ tolerate false teaching. The presence of Truth is critical to the survival of the Gospel witness and to healthy churches.

- **Specific persons:** This **isn't a call to vague generalities**. Requires homework - who is at work in influencing others and what they are saying that is untrue.
- **Teaching a different doctrine: When it comes to God's Word – new and different isn't good when it mishandles Scripture.**

(1 Tim. 1:3) Καθώς παρεκάλεσά σε προσμεῖναι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ πορευόμενος εἰς Μακεδονίαν, ἵνα παραγγείλης **τισὶν** μὴ **ἕτεροδιδασκαλεῖν**

ἕτεροδιδασκαλεῖν verb infinitive present active from **ἕτεροδιδασκαλέω** ἕτερος, διδασκαλία; only in Christian wr.) **to teach contrary to standard instruction, give divergent, i.e. divisive, instruction**

- (1 Tim. 1:6-7) Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.
- (1 Tim. 1:10) the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever **else is contrary to sound doctrine,**
- (1 Tim. 1:19) holding faith and a good conscience. By **rejecting** this, some have **made shipwreck of their faith,** 20 among whom are **Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**
- (1 Tim. 4:1-2) Now the **Spirit** expressly says that **in later times some will depart from the faith** by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and **teachings of demons,**² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,
- (1 Tim. 4:7) **Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.** Rather **train yourself for godliness;**
- (1 Tim. 5:15) For some have already **strayed after Satan.**
- (1 Tim. 6:10) For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have **wandered away from the faith** and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Style of Leadership

- Argumentative
- Their communications were meaningless
- They were motivated by a desire to be held up as authoritative instructors of the OT Law. They liked titles.
- Conceited (proud, arrogant, unteachable)
- They didn't even know what they were talking about, lacked evidence, knowledge, thrived by asserting things without a foundation of biblical truth (1:7, 6:4)

IT MATTERS WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES: CONTENT MATTERS

False doctrines based on the Wrong Use of the Law

- **Myths:** Traditional stories in pagan religions, Building endless, whacky fictitious stories which were based on very obscure genealogical references. Imaginative absurd aspects. These are anything that is not founded on reality.

Do we have myths today? Examples: Liberal denominations perpetuate myths. Having rejected the Biblical record, they resort to bizarre interpretations of what Christianity is.

- Jesus dad was a Roman German.
 - The early church made up the resurrection to compete with surrounding mystery religions that had dying and rising gods.
 - The Bible is a collection of myths. That is a myth.
 - God is evolving.
 - Ethics are evolving.
 - “Love wins.”
- **Taught strict ascetic practices** (misuse of legalistic rules, strict physical practices, beginning of Gnosticism) (4:3, **6:20**)
 - **Law: The Bible is used in the wrong way for the wrong purpose...**
 - Don't just identify Law here as **legalism**. The Law is good (see v. 8). It appears to be a reference to the Torah, especially the first five books of Moses. Vs. 8-10 give a sweep of the 10 Commandments explained in the books of Moses.
 - **False teachers used the OT as a claimed foundation of the false teachings.**
 - Just because someone quotes Scripture doesn't mean they are necessarily speaking truth. You need to learn to discern.
 - The list seems to **indicate Jewish influence (rabbinic ideas) and Pagan influence in the church. Syncretism** has always been the tendency among God's people. Allowing cultural ideas to become the identity of the church. Church loses its prophetic and truth voice when it becomes persuaded by the culture. (**Give examples...**)
 - **Questioning of the Authority and inerrancy of the Bible**
 - **Attacking the very nature of God.**
 - **Repulsed by the Cross. Met one minister who was embarrassed by the blood idea of atonement, disliked the cross and atonement idea. Too bloody.**
 - **God saves everyone regardless of their religion. All that matters is being religious.**

THE SOLUTION: BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION WITH AN AIM

SEEN BY PAUL'S CONTRAST

(1 Tim. 1:4-5) **nor to devote themselves to myths** and endless genealogies, which **promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.**⁵ The **aim** of our charge is **love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.**

(1 Tim. 1:4-5) μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις, αἵτινες ἐκζητήσεις παρέχουσιν μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει.⁵ **τὸ δὲ τέλος** τῆς παραγγελίας ἐστὶν **ἀγάπη ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας καὶ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς καὶ πίστεως ἀνυποκρίτου,**

- **τέλος (of the command) =** “the goal toward which a movement is being directed, *end, goal, outcome*”
- **Clean Heart** = morally pure heart, heart that is **free of adultery** with regard to God. Devoted faithfully to Jesus. A person who is motivated to love God first and only.
- **Clear Conscience** = nothing to hide from God. An examined inner conscience that is free of accusation. No hidden closet of sin.
- **Genuine Faith** = without pretense, pure, no hidden cracks. No play acting, hypocrisy is not present

This is the kind of goal of a Biblical Teacher who is True in what he teaches from God's Word. He is informed, accurate, has done his homework, knows what he is talking about and he stands up to falsehood in a loving but firm way.

Love is only real when it comes “ek” out of these realities. Without moral purity, conscience free of accusation, pure faith in Christ, love can never be the result. But when these things are present, love is always the result. **IT IS THE MAIN GOAL OF ALL BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION.** This is what Jesus was getting at in 95AD when He told the Ephesian church that they had lost it.

May God help us as a body to nurture this right here at Christ Covenant!