

And Why It's So Important

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to 1 Timothy chapter 4, 1 Timothy 4, in that black Bible in the chair in front of you, go to the back and find page 163, the very bottom of page 163 actually.

1 Timothy 4, we're going to do the first six verses. I love the cooing sounds.

It's been a long time since I heard those. 1 Timothy chapter 4, verses 1 through 6.

1 Timothy 4, 1 through 6. 1 Timothy 4, 1 through 6, I'll read, we'll jump in. 1 Timothy 5, 1 through 6. But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times, some will fall away from the faith, giving themselves over to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons by means of a hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience, as with a branding iron, who forbid marriage to abstain from foods which God has created unto sharing with thanks by those who believe and know the truth.

[1:35] For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected, being received with gratitude. For it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

And pointing out these things to the brethren, you'll be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith of the sound doctrine which you have followed, been following closely.

In this book called Reforming Fundamentalism, Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism by George Marsden, George Marsden showed the sad drift of Fuller Theological Seminary from being a beacon of evangelicalism to, and what's still true today, theological liberalism.

You would not ever have thought that Fuller Theological Seminary would have been a beacon of evangelicalism, but they were back in the day in the 50s. And many good aspects were found in what was then known as fundamentalism.

It goes back to the turn of the 20th century. There was the, I'll give you a little bit of church history, two sides, if you would. Modernism and fundamentalism.

[3:07] The modernists believed and began to question the inerrancy and the fallibility of Scripture, beginning with verse. The creation wasn't really creation, it wasn't the six day, 24 hours, things like that.

And then began to deny the virgin birth, the resurrection of Jesus, and all these different aspects.

And you start to move into all these different denominations. And then you had what arose out of that, the fundamentalist movement, which they believed in the fundamentals.

They talked about one of them would be the virgin birth, it's real. Another was physical resurrection of Jesus. I think there was five. But what happened was, as it came more into the 20th century, the fundamentalist movement had become more militant and even almost political.

And the main elements of the gospel began to be lost. And so, Fuller, believe it or not, led the way toward reclaiming the gospel. Staying true to Scripture, still holding on to those fundamentalist principles, but not becoming militant like the fundamentalist movement had started to drift in that direction.

But within only a short amount of time, the schools that stood strong in the faith, caved into the falsity of theological liberalism, and still advocates it today.

[4:31] Somebody even called them neo-orthodox. When I was at Master's Seminary, I had a professor who said this, liberals never start their own schools.

They only take over the conservative ones. And he wasn't, I mean, maybe not totally, but you look at, take for instance Yale or Harvard. Those colleges used to produce pastors.

And now they're anything but pastors. It's sad. Which is so vital for us as a church, a local body, when we come to this passage.

This is God's manual for church life. Again, the New Testament is really the manual for church life, how to do church. But as Paul was writing this to Timothy, the how-tos of church life.

This is what this letter is. This is what it's about. That's what Paul's intention is. He wrote God's manual for church life. Last week we looked at our identity, who we are.

[5:47] We also looked at our beliefs, what we believe, the who, the what, and today, and why it's so important.

Why it's so important. So the whole letter is about the how. Last week we looked at our identity, who we are, and our beliefs, the what.

And today we see the connection. It's this. Why is it important we know our identity and our beliefs? Why is that so important?

Why is who we are and what we believe so significant? This ties in with what Paul said in verse 14, 15, and 16 of chapter 3. Why is our identity so important?

Why is our belief system so vital? Why is our belief system so important? Because false teaching creep into this church body. That's why.

[6:56] We must not forget who we are and what we believe, else we will fall into theological liberalism ourselves. Because false teaching creep into this church body.

I'll give you a long statement. We must diligently hold on to our identity as God's house, His assembly, the pillar and bulwark of the truth, our identity, and hold on to what we believe in the gospel and Christ Jesus from His word, the scripture, what we believe.

Because false teaching can creep into this church body. And that's my main responsibility.

My main responsibility as a servant of our Lord is to teach you the truth of God's word and warn you of false teaching as I nourish myself in the words of the faith and of sound doctrine.

It's my responsibility. And it's your responsibility too. It is vital for us to be a church body committed to sound doctrine.

[8:13] I must hold to sound gospel truth, sound doctrine, the truth of God's word. If I don't, if we don't, we run the risk of apostasy.

See, this is one of the main reasons why I'm so tenacious and vigilant when it comes to church membership and these membership interviews.

This is why. Because it's vital that you members know the gospel and you truly trust Christ and Christ alone. The gospel is at stake.

14 plus years ago when it first came, that's one of the first things I said. If I'm going to come to this church, I'm going to interview every single person who's going to become a member of this church. They did not like that. Many members did not like that. You know what they used to do? Southern Baptist Church. So if you came from another Southern Baptist Church and they would have an altar call, you would come forward and you would say, I want to become a member of this church.

[9:22] I want you to come from blah, blah, blah, Southern Baptist Church. So and so comes from this blah, blah, blah, Southern Baptist Church. I'll do you a favor of taking them as a member.

Saying aye, aye. They become a member right then and there.

No way. That is not going to happen here. You don't know where that person's coming from. You don't know what they're all about. And they're going to become a member of this church? How do you know they're a Christian?

How do you know if they even know the gospel? Man, I caught a lot of flack. Huge backlash for wanting to do those membership interviews. I don't know. Travis remembers.

Travis backed me up too. The gospel's at stake. This is why it's so important. Paul warned Timothy against apostasy.

Apostasy. It involved forbidding marriage and false asceticism. That's what was happening in the church in Ephesus. False because God created everything good and all things should be received with thankful prayer.

[10:22] We pray with thanks in harmony with God's revealed truth. We must hold to the truth. So let's jump in, shall we? Why is it important that we hold to our identity and our beliefs?

Notice verse 1 of chapter 4. But the Spirit explicitly says at a later time some will fall away from the faith. In contrast to the truth, what we believe, there will be false doctrine which was, and he says explicitly, really a word you can translate as, unmistakably spoken by the Holy Spirit who spoke through Scripture.

You actually see here the Spirit's role in Scripture. That's why he's called the Spirit of truth. The Spirit speaks from the Word. That's how God speaks today. It's from His Word, the truth, Genesis to Revelation.

These specific warnings were given by Jesus. Matthew chapter 24. Mark chapter 13. Later times, some will fall away.

Later times. We are in those later times. Not because there's a virus pandemic going on in the world. Some people think, oh, this is the end of the world. Well, kind of, maybe, sort of.

[11:41] I don't know. We could last another 50 years. We could last another 100 years. We don't know that. It wasn't as bad as the Spanish flu.

Millions of people were dying from the Spanish flu. I mean, I would think the end of the world was coming then, don't you? Holy cow. We are in the last days.

Why? Because when Jesus came, He inaugurated the Messianic age, which is the beginning of the last days. So when Jesus came, He began the last days.

We're in the last days. Well, that's the long last days. Eh, I know. I'm not the guy who put everything in charge. I'm just telling you what it says. Yeah. Of course, too, keep in mind, as we get closer to the end when Jesus will return, there will be the great apostasy.

And we are getting closer to that time. Not because there's a virus going around, but because Jesus said it is. In those later times, some will fall away.

[12:48] This falling away was predicted in the Old Testament, friends, by the prophets. It was predicted by Jesus Himself. We just mentioned that. And other apostles, Peter mentions it.

And though you see events of this falling away, apostasy happening in church history, little pockets of that, the greater apostasy is yet to come, is yet future.

Some will fall away from, excuse me, fall away from the faith, fall away because they were never truly saved in the first place. People don't lose their salvation. You don't understand that, right?

Jesus said it's those who had no roots from Matthew chapter 13 with the parable of the sower, Luke chapter 8. And He says, fall away from the faith.

The faith is another way of saying the truth of Christianity. it's objective, it's the objective truth of the gospel, its maintenance. That's what he's talking about.

[14:03] The objective truth of the gospel of Christianity, they will fall away. Well, what will happen in this falling away? in what way will they fall away?

How these false teachers have given themselves over to deceitful spirits and teachings from demons. Look at what he says, the next part of verse 1. Paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

The word paying attention means giving heed, giving oneself over to. It's actually the same word that's used in chapter 3, verse 8. Where it talks about an elder or a deacon should not give himself over to wine.

As those who give themselves over to wine to get drunk, Paul is telling Timothy, these false teachers have given themselves over to deceitful spirits and teachings from demons.

to lead them away from the truth that's in Christ. Sound Christian doctrine. And look at that phrase, deceptive spirits and doctrines of demons.

[15:25] It's not every day you read something like that, right? Who operate in and through others, who come into the church body and teach such falsity this teaching comes from demons.

Like the prosperity gospel. That's from demons. Feel good sermons. Therapy talks.

Anything to get us off the sufficiency of God's word. Psychology. Psychology. Psychology.

Psychology. Anything that directs us away from Christ and the cross and waters it down.

All you gotta do is just watch TBN. There's doctrines of demons right there. Listen, anything or anyone that contradicts the revealed truth of God as given to us in the Old and New Testaments is not of God but of the demonic realm.

Anything that adds to the gospel or diverts us from the gospel is not of God. Anything that says, oh, you'll be godly if you will, you'll be closer to God and you'll have His approval if you, fill in the blank.

[16:56] Anything that directs us to some type of experience or your feelings rather than truth. And look at what He says, the means by which this happens, verse 2, by means of the hypocrisy of liars mediated through humans.

Lying, hypocritical teachers. The things these humans taught were in hypocrisy. You know, the old concepts of the idea of what that word means, hypocrisy, they had a mask on, pretending to be one thing while they were actually something else.

They were fakers, liars, deceivers. Again, directing them away from the truth, away from sound doctrine, away from the words of the faith, away from the gospel and all the facets of the gospel.

And then look, He says, by means of the hypocrisy of liars, seared in their own consciences with a branding iron. First one, we'll look at the word conscience and then we'll look at seared.

He's used that word before conscience. Remember chapter 1, verse 5? A good conscience. I think He used it again in chapter 1, verse 19. What's He mean by the conscience?

[18:24] Conscience is a life of obedience. someone who's aware of their culpability before God, their conscience of what's right and wrong before God in both attitude and actions. There's an honest self-evaluation and self-awareness of their conduct.

But I'll tell you, our conscience, it's only as reliable as it adheres to the truth of God. because He says here it's seared as with a branding iron and that word, you know, we have all these English words seared with a branding iron and in the Greek it's just one word.

He's saying the seared, the nerve endings were destroyed. Their consciences have been made dull, null, void to what is right and wrong.

The nerve endings were destroyed. What's wrong is right. What's right is wrong. No honesty, no rightness, no obedience. I mean, you see it in our culture.

We're going to destroy things and call it peaceful. How does that make any sense?

[19:45] It's like backwards. But what do you expect? It's from the world. The problem is that thinking gets into the church.

What's right is wrong. What's wrong is right in the church. within the church body. That's what's happening. You see that in Ephesus begins to take place. When truth is abandoned, the conscience becomes scrambled and disabled and unreliable.

It becomes seared and distorted by sin. That's why it's only as reliable as it adheres to the word of God. We must be a church that adheres ourselves to the word of God.

One writer puts it like this. These men were quote, untrue. Their appearances were insincere and their consciences were unreliable. End quotation. Their consciences had become so hardened and they couldn't distinguish truth from error.

They couldn't figure it out. That's how seared it was. And notice he starts to describe two different ways that they were bringing about this falsity within the church.

[21:12] Verse 3, who forbid marriage to abstain from foods. The first action forbidden by these false teachers is marriage. Any religious group that forbids marriage or flip over to the other side to justify polygamous marriage is contrary to scripture and false.

that means Roman Catholic Church. That's false. That's wrong teaching. They forbid marriage within the priesthood.

And then to abstain from foods. So, stay away from sin foods and you'll be really, really godly. Don't get married and you're going to be really godly.

You're going to be a really, really good Christian. Don't eat X whatever. Boy, you're holy. Boy, your relationship with God is really good but if you're eating that, well, your relationship with God is marred now.

Oh, if you get married, oh, no, no, no. Your relationship with God, that's really bad now. What? That's what's happening in the church. This is false, lying, hypocritical, deceitfulness.

[22:22] Even today, what's infiltrated into the church a group that says we should go back to Jewish dietary laws and they're trying to put that on Christians.

What is that? That's false teaching. Get us away from the sufficiency of Christ and the gospel, right? Right? Notice he says the end of verse 3 which God has created, literally, he says, created, unto sharing, ace, unto sharing with thanks by those who believe and know the truth.

Look, marriage was instituted by God, food was created by God to be shared with thanks. By the way, I think the King James Version has meat here, it's changed from meat, it's not the word meat as the KJV says, it's the generic word food.

Food. Marriage was instituted by God. Food was created by God to be shared with thanks. We receive it with thanks.

So you should pray before your meals. I'm just kidding. These are good gifts from God to be shared and enjoyed together. That's what he's saying. Get married unless you have the gift of singleness.

[23:53] And there's few who have the gift of singleness, it's true. Now you should get married.

And notice he says, in the last part of verse three, by those who believe and know the truth, these are believers, followers of Christ.

They are the ones who believe and know the truth, which is all that is revealed about the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in Him. God gave these to us for our pleasure, receiving them from Him with great thanks.

That's what Paul's saying. And then he moves into why their false teaching was false, verse four. For, here's the reason everything created by God is good.

God created all things to be good. Genesis chapter one, verse 31. The Hebrew is tov ma'od. It was very good. Why were they rejecting what God had created to be good?

And nothing is to be rejected, he says. These things, marriage, food, these things do not mar nor enhance our relationship with God through Christ.

[25 : 11] It's only through Christ that we have relationship with the Father. Christ Jesus saves. It's Christ and Christ alone. It's the gospel.

And yes, it's true. You can worship your marriage. It can become an idol. That's true. You can worship food. Food can become an idol. That's true. But we don't forbid these gifts.

And notice what he says. Verse four again, nothing is to be rejected. New American Senate has if it is received with gratitude.

Literally, it's being received. It's just a participle. Being received with thanks. Twice he talks about thanks. He's trying to get a point across, right? You should be thankful for these.

These gifts from God. We receive these good gifts from God with thanks and gratitude. He is the giver of good gifts. And we give him thanks for them.

[26 : 15] No food should be thrown off or unfit for spiritual reasons if it's received with thanks. So that's why all of you should embrace sushi and love sushi.

Where's Michael Matthews? He left on purpose. He knew I was going to mention that. When he comes back in we're going to talk about that. You should be thankful for sushi and eat it heartily unto the Lord.

Why are some of you gagging? I had sushi. Look at verse five. And verse five is a summation of what he said in verse three and four.

Sums up this. He says, for it is sanctified by means of the word of God in prayer. The good gifts God gives his people specifically here marriage and food in the context are acceptable or good for use by means of God's word and prayer.

They are made holy or set apart as good when we give thanks. That's what he means. And you see this phrase by means of the word of God in prayer.

[27 : 29] What does he talk about that? When he mentions it puts these two phrases together.

Word of God in prayer. The best way to think of this phrase word of God in prayer is it's God's word determines the quality of the prayer.

One writer put it like this. In other words, quote, it is a prayer in harmony with revealed truth. So the truth governs what you're doing.

Not your feelings. Not your experience. Not what you think. Truth directs us. Guides us. And we give thanks. So God has revealed that marriage and food are good gifts from him to be enjoyed.

You're no longer under certain dietary restrictions or laws to be holy. You can embrace sushi to the glory of God. Oh, don't you give me that.

He's shaking his head no. No, sushi. Bite your tongue. We're no longer under certain foods or dietary restrictions. By the way, those dietary restrictions were given to Israel to show that they were holy.

[28 : 44] They were already God's people. So that they could become God's people. They were already God's people. It was to show that they were separate. They're supposed to be distinct. Even in the foods that they ate.

They were already holy. It wasn't supposed to make them holy in the sense of get them more approval with God. They missed the whole point with that. When we pray thanking God for the good gifts he's provided it is acceptable or good for us as his people.

We deal with false teaching by going back to and following after God's revealed word. That's what drives us. False teaching will always veer off of the revealed truth as given in the Old and New Testament.

it comes down to this. The Bible is sufficient. Christ is sufficient. You don't need more of mmmm. Mmm. Another way to put it truth overrides our feelings or how we think things should be.

[30:00] God's word should always override our thoughts or our feelings or our experience. Your feelings are not even part of the equation.

And not to be insensitive your feelings really don't matter in that sense. They don't. It's about what's true and what's sufficient in God's word.

You know our culture thrives on this though. That's all about your feelings. Because I feel like I'm going to be a transgender.

I feel like I should be a different gender. That's how it goes. That's how our culture goes. And the church follows suit with that and they think oh yeah we should be driven by our feelings.

whatever happened to truth. Whatever happened to the truth directing us and guiding us. This is what God's word says. That should direct us.

[31:00] That should direct what we do our thoughts our feelings our actions directing it with thanks through prayer. That's what Paul's saying. Truth overrides that.

And then I pulled in verse 6 and verses 1 through 5 because it's kind of actually a transition verse between the two sections verses 1 through 5 and 7 through 16 because it moves from exhortation to church via Timothy to exhortation to Timothy himself on how to watch his life as well as how to deal with the false teaching to pay heed to himself first because notice what Paul says in verse 6 in pointing out these things to the brethren what are these sayings?

Well the things he's written collectively is true but specifically in the near context what he just said about false teaching. Timothy needed to be Paul's spokesman to the church about these things. Timothy should warn direct pastor and guide Christ's church as their pastor. Point out these things or making these things known to the brethren to the brothers and sisters in Christ to the fellow members of God's family and God's house those devoted to Jesus carry out the task of warning directing and pastoring Christ's body.

If he does notice you'll be a good servant of Christ Jesus. If he's faithful to point out these things to the church body good actually you could translate it as blameless or even excellent be an excellent servant of Christ Jesus.

[32:52] Solid Christ's servants warn and teach the truth not feelings. Your feelings are irrelevant to this.

No Christ's servants warn and teach the truth not their feelings and notice for Timothy himself look again verse 6 nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

Nourish means to feed upon or live on so he himself should nourish on the truth. he himself should feed on the truth.

Timothy's food he says was the words of the faith which is the words of the Lord Jesus the teaching of the apostles and more specifically of Paul even the Old Testament in some regard Paul was implying his words in his letter were true scripture.

and when he says the words of the faith the words of faith this is God's objective truth all that entails Christianity it's the message of the gospel with its body of truth the word of God who God is and his justice and righteousness who we are we are sinners who Jesus is God man God the son taking on flesh what he's done he died for sinners and resurrected from the dead the response we repent and trust Christ that's the gospel and if you're here and you're not a Christian you need to trust Christ you need to repent and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ because that's all that matters Christ and him crucified and do you know what will happen to you when you die you will face judgment will you face the arms of Jesus and the father because you've trusted Christ he says come now this is what he means by the words of the faith it's all that entails

[35:05] Christianity the gospel and he says notice words of the faith and of the sound doctrine good teaching he talks about this in chapter 1 verse 10 that which was taught by Paul sound means to be healthy correct true in contrast with the teaching of the false teachers it was unhealthy teaching if Timothy would be a good servant he must feed himself on good teaching and notice he says of the sound doctrine which you have been following literally which you have followed closely Timothy was doing this and Paul says I want to keep encouraging keep following closely what I've told you what I've taught you keep doing it don't stop keep going give give careful attention to this you've been doing it don't stop Timothy had followed it with his mind making it his own that's what the word means he was doing this already and Paul exhorted him to continue to follow closely and so I exhort you as this is written to Timothy as a congregation as this is written to me as your pastor to you as a congregation so you should also do this you should hold to the gospel and to sound

doctrine feed yourself on the truth and hold to this as a church we must diligently hold on to our identity as God's house as assembly the pillar and bulwark of the truth that's our identity it's who we are remember we looked at that last week and hold on to what we believe in the gospel in Christ

Jesus from his word the scripture because false teaching can creep into this church body why is it important we know our identity and our beliefs why is who we are and what we believe so significant because false teaching can creep into this church body so such perfect providence as we begin this new year we don't know what's in store for us this year we don't know what God has for us but what a great exhortation to hold fast to the gospel and we get to celebrate a tangible reminder of this gospel to which we hold and the elements the bread the juice the Lord's supper which is for us as Christians if you don't know Christ it's not for you it's for us as Christians and you might say hey

I'm not a member here if you come from a church of like faith and practice we prefer you're baptized by immersion if you come from a church of like faith and practice partake of this with us these are going to be reminders tangible reminders that we have of gospel truth of what we hold to just the coincidence of this passage and then holding to the faith and then partake of the Lord's supper I thought it was great that God providentially worked that out it was good I like that how he did that so I want to pray and ask for his grace for us to hold to the truth and then to direct us as we prepare ourselves for the Lord's supper let's pray together our father thank you for Paul and how you used him as your servant to speak truth to speak the truth to write these things to Timothy which are written to us and we are praying that we as a church would hold to as members in this church we will hold to the gospel we will hold to the truth all that entails of Christianity keep us in the faith hold us fast help us to be tenacious with it and vigilant and thank you for the tangible way we will remind ourselves of this truth by the ordinance of the

Lord's supper we pray we'll fill our minds with gospel truth we'll fill our minds with the words of the faith and we'll be so thankful that you've saved us you've forgiven us you've justified us you've reconciled with us we have communion with you we'll be so thankful we are so thankful we'll continue to show this thanks attitude of thanks before you we're going to have our time of focus and of quiet in just a moment but first

I want to sing the first verse to the song of the communion hymn and then we'll do our time of silence which there's some things I want to give to you to fill your mind with when it comes to before you partake of the Lord's supper but let's sing the first verse to the communion hymn and then we'll do this