

# Dear Timothy

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[ 0 : 00 ] We are going to move into our time in the Word together, and today we're going to begin a new series of sermons through the book of 1 Timothy, the letter of 1 Timothy in the New Testament.

And this will last us right up until Christmas. And I know that we have a variety of people here this morning, some who have been Christians, followers of Jesus for decades, and some to whom all of this is pretty new. And so I'm going to just take a few minutes to explain what the letter of Timothy is, and who wrote it, what kind of writing this is, and where it fits into the bigger story of the Bible.

And then we'll jump in and look at the first few verses of this letter. So if you have your Bible, you can open it up to 1 Timothy, and you can follow along. We'll also have the words on the screen. So for those of you who may not know, after Jesus came, he died on the cross, he rose again from the dead, and then he continued to appear to his followers for a period of about 40 years, sorry, 40 days.

And then Jesus was taken up into heaven. We call that the ascension of Jesus. And then not too long after that was the Jewish festival of Pentecost. And it was celebrated in Jerusalem. And it was then that God poured out his spirit on the apostles, those men that Jesus had chosen. And the apostles were enabled by the power of the spirit to do miraculous signs, kind of like Jesus did. And they were enabled to speak the very words of God to the people. And that day, the apostle Peter, by the power of God's spirit within him, preached a sermon, and thousands who heard it came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and as their Savior. We usually speak of this day, Pentecost, as the day that the church was born. The word church in its original ancient meaning is very simply congregation or assembly or gathering. And in this case, it was those who had gathered and were united by their faith in Jesus as their Messiah and as their Savior. So Peter and the other apostles, they continued doing these miraculous signs. They continued preaching the good news about Jesus to people all over the place. And more and more came to repent and believe and be added to the church.

These people accepted God's gift of salvation and the number just kept growing and growing. All of this, by the way, is recorded in your Bibles in the New Testament book of Acts.

[ 2 : 54 ] Well, the Jewish leaders were not too happy with this. And so they began to persecute the church, those who believed in Jesus. And many of the believers scattered. They fled for their lives.

They left Jerusalem. They left Israel, some of them, and went to surrounding territories and areas. And they began telling people about Jesus wherever they went. And so suddenly, churches began to spring up in all the surrounding nations and peoples. And in the midst of all this, there was a man named Saul. And Saul was a Pharisee. He was a persecutor of the church of Jesus. And Luke tells us in the book of Acts about how Jesus himself, from heaven, stopped Saul in his tracks when he was on the road to Damascus. Jesus revealed himself to Saul. And Saul became a believer. In fact, more than that, Jesus chose Saul to be one of his apostles, one of his spokesmen. And Jesus gave Saul, who from that day on changed his name to Paul, a mission, a task. So Paul was now to go to the non-Jewish places all around the Mediterranean Sea and tell them about Jesus and the salvation that he offers.

And so Paul did this. He went on three, what we call missionary journeys, traveling from city to city, sometimes on foot, sometimes by boat, across the Mediterranean Sea to different places.

And Luke tells us in the book of Acts that some people in each of these cities came to believe in Jesus. And local churches were born in all these towns and cities all around the Mediterranean Sea.

Well, in one of these cities, Paul came across a young man named Timothy. And Timothy's mother was a Jew and his father was a Greek. But Timothy's mother had raised Timothy to believe in God. And Timothy accepted the good news of Jesus for himself. And he was saved when, most likely

when Paul and Barnabas actually came to his city with the message of Jesus on Paul's first missionary journey.

[ 5 : 13 ] According to Luke, Timothy grew in his faith and he matured to the point that other Christians in his little church regarded him very highly. And so Paul actually took Timothy on as a co-worker for his second and third missionary journeys.

So they, Paul and Timothy, traveled together and worked together to make Christ known and to see local churches established all around the Mediterranean Sea. I'll put a little graphic on the screen there.

So you can see the line. They went all over the place. This is just one of Paul's missionary journeys. And one of these cities where a church began was the ancient city of Ephesus. You can kind of see it right there. It's just on the western coast of what's today Turkey. Back then it was the Roman province of Asia.

And you can read about how the church was started there in Ephesus in the book of Acts chapter 19. Now the reason this is significant is because this city of Ephesus is where Timothy is right now as Paul is writing this letter to him. We don't know the exact date that Paul wrote this letter, but it was sometime between the time that this church in Ephesus was started and sometime and probably the time when Paul died, which is actually a really short period of time. It's only about a 10-year window.

And so we're looking at about 55 to 65 AD. And maybe even we can narrow that down a little further because it seems from the letter that the church has already had some time to be established.

[ 6 : 59 ] And there's already been some things happening. We've seen some false teachers creeping into the church. And so probably right around that time, 55 to 65 AD, this is only 25 to 35 years after Jesus ascended into heaven.

So if you want to open your Bibles up to 1 Timothy, let's look at the first few verses and see how this letter begins. 1 Timothy.

1 Timothy. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope.

To Timothy, my true son in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.

[ 8 : 10 ] So this is very obviously a letter. Paul introduces himself by name right at the top. He tells us who he's writing to, Timothy. There's a greeting which is at the same time kind of a blessing.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God and from Christ Jesus to you. And then Paul jumps in verse 3 right into giving instruction to Timothy.

And this is quite typical of Paul's 13 letters in the New Testament. They're full of instruction. Instruction for how individuals that he's writing to ought to live.

But usually he writes to churches, local churches in different cities. And so instructions for those local churches and how they're to live. Let's notice just a few details in the introduction here.

First, Paul reminds Timothy and the church there in Ephesus of who he is. He's writing as an apostle of Christ Jesus.

[ 9 : 12 ] This is really important. It's like Paul saying, this isn't just a friendly letter of correspondence, but I am writing on behalf of Christ Jesus himself as his apostle, his chosen spokesperson.

So these instructions, these encouragements, these promises that I'm about to give to you, they're not just from me, but they're from Jesus who speaks on whose behalf I speak.

So this is why we consider this letter so special, why we consider it sacred. Because it's not just the words of a guy named Paul to a friend named Timothy.

Rather, it contains the very words of Christ Jesus himself spoken through Paul to Timothy. So we take these words very seriously. They're the words of God.

And Paul very briefly mentions how he came to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. He says, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God and of Christ Jesus.

[ 10 : 18 ] So both God and Christ Jesus together commanded it. They decreed that Paul be an apostle. And he mentions just one thing each about God and about Jesus there in his introduction.

God, our Savior. He is the one who saves us, who rescues us. And Jesus, our hope. He's the one who our hope is in. And then he goes on to Timothy, my true son in the faith.

Now it's easy to imagine how close this relationship would have been between Paul and Timothy. I mean, here they were traveling together, working together, all around the Mediterranean world.

And Paul being the older of the two and Timothy, a young man, it's easy to see how they would have had a close father-son-like relationship.

But Paul thinks this way as a father-son relationship, not just because of their many shared experiences, not just because of the many moments where he probably got to counsel Timothy, but because they share the same faith.

[ 11 : 33 ] He says, to Timothy, my true son in the faith. This is the key. They both have faith in God. They both have this same faith in Christ Jesus.

In fact, it's possible, not for sure, but possible that Paul was even the one who led Timothy to be saved, to know about Jesus at the start when he first came to Lystra.

So they have a very special, close relationship because of their faith in Jesus. They're like spiritual family, father and son. Now as we get beyond this greeting and into verse 3, we see that Paul has some instructions for Timothy.

He says, As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer.

So they were both in Ephesus at one point, but then Paul left to go into Macedonia. And at that time, he urged Timothy to stay there in Ephesus. This kind of brings us to the question of what Timothy's role was in Ephesus.

[ 12 : 49 ] You may have heard it said that Timothy was a pastor in the church at Ephesus. And, you know, we kind of call these letters, 1st, 2nd Timothy, Titus, the pastoral epistles.

But actually, if we look at it really closely, nowhere in the New Testament is Timothy called a pastor. Neither is he called an elder. Neither is he called an apostle, like Paul is.

But in two of Paul's letters, he refers to Timothy as his co-worker. And we often hear Paul telling us in his letters of how he sends Timothy over here, or he sends him over there, or he leaves Timothy behind with this church.

And it seems that probably we should stop thinking of Timothy as the pastor of the church in Ephesus. He is doing that kind of a shepherding work while he's there.

But this is part of his assignment. We could probably think of him as an apostolic delegate who's been assigned to serve in this church in order to deal with any particular problems that have arisen, that need special care or attention, and to see that the church is strengthened and established and healthy.

[ 14 : 02 ] Now, one tendency as we talk about that kind of a relationship to the church is to think of this letter as merely a kind of instructional handbook for pastors or church leaders.

It is written to Timothy, and he is kind of functioning as a pastor or leader while he's there. But really, this letter is for the whole church. About halfway through the letter, Paul makes this crystal clear.

He tells us what his purpose is in writing this letter. And this is in 1 Timothy 3, verse 14. He says, Although I hope to come to you soon, I'm writing you these instructions so that if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

So Paul intends to come back to Ephesus soon. But in case something happens, in case he gets put into prison again, in case he gets held up in his travels, he wants Timothy to have these instructions so that Timothy will know how people there in the church at Ephesus ought to live as the church.

How they ought to conduct themselves in God's household. So what is this letter all about? Well, it does have some instructions and encouragement for leaders in the church, but much more, it's all about how we as a church should conduct ourselves, should live as followers of Jesus.

[ 15 : 34 ] It's not just a leadership manual kind of letter. It's a church life handbook kind of letter written by Christ Jesus through Paul to us.

Let me say it another way. The aim of this letter is not just to equip church pastors and elders. The aim of this letter is to show us how we as a local spiritual family of God should live, should behave, should act.

And this letter tells us some of the ways that our faith in Jesus should transform our conduct. And I'm really excited about this. Just as God was at work in our church in the last sermon series we did through the Gospel of John, showing us things about Jesus maybe, I hope, that we hadn't seen before, opening our eyes to see more of His glory.

I hope and pray that now as we turn to this letter of 1 Timothy, the Lord will do some wonderful things and continue that work of transforming our lives as a church to match the faith that we share in Jesus.

And this letter touches on all kinds of conduct in the church. I'll just list off a few things. Paul will give some definition to what's right and what's wrong. He's going to tell us about what kinds of things we should and should not be teaching, should and should not be talking about.

[16:54] He will set some clear priorities for us and what kinds of things we should be giving ourselves to, our attention to as a church. He'll have specific instructions for men and for women.

He's going to lay out a framework for leadership in the church. He'll warn us about some of the false teachings that are coming. He'll talk about how different people in the church should relate to each other, how we should care for the needy among us.

So this is a wonderful letter from God through Paul to his people, to us. And I'm excited about how our church may grow to increasing spiritual maturity and unity in the months ahead as we spend time here in this letter together.

So let's look at it. Let's look at the first instructions that Paul gives to Timothy in verses 3 to 11. And we'll see what we can draw from these words for our church here in Davidson and for ourselves.

So I'll just read it again, starting in verse 3. Although I hope to come to you soon, I'm writing, oh sorry, that's back in chapter 3.

[18:04] Verse 3, chapter 1. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.

Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work which is by faith. The goal of this command is love which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law but they do not know what they're talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God which he entrusted to me.

So with the time that we have left this morning, I want to look at six problems in the church, in Ephesus, that we see in these first few verses.

[19:48] Verse three down to verse eight. Problem number one. Certain people are teaching false doctrines.

Paul says, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer. So this is a problem. We've got people in the church who are teaching things that aren't true.

And Paul gives more detail about what kinds of things they're teaching down in verses six and seven. He says, some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk wanting to be teachers of the law but not knowing what they're talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

So these people who are doing the false teaching, they've gotten away from the gospel. They've gotten off the main message that we're supposed to be teaching and proclaiming as a church.

They're appealing to the Old Testament law as an authority for how we should be living as followers of Jesus in the church today. But Paul says, they don't even know what they're talking about.

[21:02] In verse eight, he says, we know that the law is good if one uses it properly. And so the implication here is that these false teachers, they're not using the law properly.

They're misunderstanding it. They're misapplying it. Now we don't know all the details of exactly what they were teaching from the Old Testament law, but if we think back to the confrontations that Jesus had with the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the religious leaders back in Jerusalem, we can

imagine the kinds of things they might be saying and teaching.

So Paul wants Timothy to put a stop to this. He wants Timothy to command them not to teach these things any longer. So that's the first problem.

Certain people teaching false doctrines. The second problem in the church, there are people following myths and genealogies. He says, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.

So it seems that some of these false teachers, they're making a really big deal about these Jewish myths and Jewish ancestry in their teachings. And they're urging people to pay close attention to this stuff.

[ 22 : 22 ] And some of the believers are getting sucked into it. They're buying into this. And it's leading the church to get away from the main thing, the gospel, the good news of Jesus.

And so Paul urges Timothy, command these people not to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. So that's the second problem. People following myths and genealogies.

Problem number three. So these first two problems, people teaching false things and people following, giving attention to myths and genealogies, gives rise to a third problem.

And it's controversy and speculations in the church. Such things promote controversial speculations, he says, rather than advancing God's work, which is by faith.

So it seems that, I mean, you can imagine this. Like, if you're emphasizing genealogies and tracing out lineages and all kinds of things, you can imagine the kind of quibbling and arguments and disputes that would be coming up and how these Old Testament laws should be applied and how these ancestries and genealogies make this person more prominent than this person over here.

[ 23 : 45 ] So maybe we should listen to this person and not this person. And with these controversial speculations, it's translated differently depending on your Bible, your English translation, but there's at least three ideas in here.

The first is, it's promoting controversy, disputes, arguments, are happening over these things. So that's the first idea in it.

The second, some translations render it as empty or useless speculation. So Paul's saying that these are things, these are matters about which it's, at the end of the day, debating over this is pointless.

It's empty. There's no fruit to it. There's nothing good coming from it. It's useless. And then finally, there's that idea of speculation. So they're not talking about facts.

They're not talking about truth. They've gone off of that into speculations, raising questions about obscure things from these myths and genealogies and from the Old Testament law.

[ 24 : 55 ] What is speculation? It's coming up with theories and guesses and opinions without a firm factual basis.

So that's the third problem. The false teaching and the focus on these myths and endless genealogies is leading to controversy.

It's leading to speculating of all kinds. Useless, pointless over things that we can't even be certain of.

That's problem number three. Problem number four, these speculations and disputes are not furthering God's agenda for the church. He says, such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work, God's program, God's agenda.

So there's something that God wants us to be doing as a church. He has a plan. He has a purpose for us. He has a track that He wants us to be on and the problem is that these things, these disputes and controversies and speculations are taking us away from that.

[ 26 : 13 ] They're distracting us. They're sidelining us. That's problem number four. Number five, some people in the church have departed from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

Verse five, he says, the goal of this command is love which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk, wanting to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they're talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

This is a pretty heavy statement. Some people in the church have departed. They've left off from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

This is a big problem. We need a heart check here. What's the goal? What's the motivation of these people? Paul makes it clear that the false teachers themselves are the ones who have left these things behind as they turn to meaningless talk, senseless babble, fruitless discussions over these things.

That's problem number five. Some in the church have departed from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. And finally, problem number six.

[ 27 : 46 ] there is pride in abundance. Arrogance and ignorance seem to describe these false teachers.

They're confidently affirming things, says Paul, and yet they don't even know what they're talking about. I mean, think of that. They aren't using the law properly.

Verse eight. They don't understand it. They're misapplying it, so they're ignorant about what they're speaking about, and yet they're confidently proclaiming it. There's arrogance and pride in these teachers.

Pride is deadly in the church, especially if it comes to find a pulpit or a platform or a leadership position. The sense we get is that these teachers are more concerned about having a following than they are about anything else.

So these are the six problems. There could be more, but these are the ones I found in these verses. There's a lot there. Certain people teaching false doctrines, people following myths and genealogies, which are leading to controversy and disputes over useless speculations, and these speculations and disputes are not furthering God's agenda for the church.

[ 29 : 07 ] Some of these people have departed from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith, and pride is one of the things that's at the root of this. Paul's going to go on to talk more about the law and its purpose in verse eight to eleven.

We're going to come back to that in a future message in about three weeks, but what can we take as a church for ourselves from these six problems? I think the Lord would have us do some reflecting, some prayerful reflecting as we think of these problems in the church at Ephesus.

And I came up with sort of three, I guess you could say, ways that we can respond to these six problems that we see in the church. First, I think we see here that we need to check our hearts. If we think back to the beginning of this year and our church's annual meeting, our elders shared with the church five growth priorities, and one of those was growing in love, that we as a church would grow in our love for one another.

Well, Paul tells us here in verse seven, that love grows out of a pure heart. It flows out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

[ 30 : 33 ] That's the fertile soil that real Christian love grows in. And so, if we want to grow to be a more loving church, we need to ask ourselves, do we have a pure heart and a good conscience, a clean conscience, do we have a sincere faith?

The problem in Ephesus was that some had departed from those things. They turned away from those things. They'd given their hearts instead to the desires of the flesh. They were no longer acting according to a clear conscience, and they'd turned away from that sincere faith in Jesus. And I think God is asking us here, each one of us, to simply examine ourselves, to prayerfully examine our own hearts. And so let me ask you, how is your heart?

Are you walking in sincere faith in Jesus? are you living by the Spirit to please God?

Or are you kind of gotten off of that, gotten away from that, knowingly going against your conscience, living to scratch the itch of the flesh?

[ 31 : 54 ] or are you continually coming back to Christ when you have sinned and when you have done wrong and confessing and repenting and receiving His grace and walking with Him?

Or are you living in habitual, persistent sin, doing things you know are wrong? So I want to urge you to prayerfully examine your own heart because the love that we long to see overflow and abound in our church requires good soil to grow in, a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith in Jesus.

And hey, if you're struggling with this, if you're wrestling with doubt, if you're feeling cold and hard inside, unresponsive, would you tell a brother or sister in the church would you ask them to pray for you?

Just share that you're struggling with them. We don't have to do this alone. So that's the first thing that we can do in response to this is to check our hearts.

Paul said it this way in this letter to the Corinthians. He said, examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you unless, of course, you fail to test?

[ 33 : 23 ] That's the first thing to do, to check our own hearts. The second thing is to check our focus and our priorities and our message. And this is a church thing.

Are we as a church keeping the main thing, the main thing? Are we staying focused? Are we staying on mission? Are we staying on message? church? Is the gospel, the good news of Jesus, the main thing, the biggest priority of our church?

Is it our main teaching? Is that what we're mostly focused on sharing with the community around us, with the people around us who are lost? Or are we getting sidetracked?

Are we getting distracted? distracted? Now I know some of us have been Christians for a long time. And sometimes we can grow dull.

We can get bored. We can tire of hearing the same things over and over and over again. Hopefully not, but some of you maybe think that, why didn't you tell us some new stuff, Pastor Josh?

[ 34 : 37 ] Stop just telling us the same thing over and over again. I want to hear some different things. But Paul speaks here to remind us that this, the gospel of Jesus, is the thing.

It's the main thing. As Paul says in verse 11, it is the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God.

That's the sound doctrine. That's the message that we've been entrusted with. That's what we've got to be focused on, making that known. Are we doing that?

We don't leave off of this ever. So this is why we're doing Alive on Sunday mornings. This is why we did Five Day Club this summer. This is why we're doing Light the Night on October 31st and the Christmas carol sing in December.

There's no end to the things that we could pour our time and energy into. But our time and energy is limited. So are we using it to make the gospel of Jesus known in this community to those who don't know it?

[ 35 : 51 ] That's the second way we can respond. Check our focus. Check our priorities. Check our message. And finally, the third one. One of the big problems in the church at Ephesus was controversial speculations.

Speculations that caused controversy. Speculations which were useless, empty, pointless. Pointless disputes over guesses, theories, opinions, things that are not especially rooted in fact. Now in their day they had their controversial speculations over Jewish law, over myths and genealogies. what do we here today have our controversial speculations over?

Now this is something I want to urge you not to take offense over. And I also want to confess that I am guilty here myself. But I'd like to suggest that we here today have our controversial speculations not over Old Testament law but over Bible prophecies and end times timelines and theories and frameworks.

I'd like to suggest that we have our controversial speculations over what's happening in the news and what that means in the grand scheme of God's plan over politics and who will win or lose the next election and what that will mean for us in the days ahead.

[ 37 : 31 ] Now yes some of these things have to do with what we read in the Bible. So did the Old Testament law stuff that these teachers in Ephesus were getting off into. It's certainly not wrong to do earnest Bible study to seek to understand the scriptures how they apply.

But I think like they did in Ephesus with the Old Testament law we all too easily and often today when it comes to end times matters of Bible prophecies we get off the plain meaning into all kinds of speculations guesses theories opinions things that are not rooted in fact or clearly stated in scripture they're guesses about how things will unfold in the future now in Ephesus the problem was teachers in the church who are promoting these things and who are confidently affirming all kinds of things but I think our problem today is not so much teachers in our midst but teachers and influencers online now there's some good content online don't get me wrong but many lack discernment I wonder what Paul would say to us in our day would he tell us to stop listening to that kind of stuff on YouTube would he tell us to stop listening to self appointed discernment ministry people we may think that that guy seems to really know his stuff he knows what he's talking about he's so confident but do we really know him what if he is confidently affirming and yet he doesn't even know really at the end of the day what he's talking about let us admit that when it comes to the

future only

God knows the future only God knows the intricacies of how his plan will unfold and how his prophetic words will be fulfilled at the end and so based on what Paul says to Timothy here I would urge us not to listen to people who speculate about what's soon to happen or what's just around the corner I would urge us not to listen to people who tell us confidently that they know the significance of all the things that are happening in the news in God's plan these things are guesses these are theories these are speculations and they're controversial and as Paul says they do not advance God's work God's agenda I think these things often steal our attention away from our main priority as a church it's one reason I don't support Bible prophecy conferences or end times conferences because what are they more often than not it's a mixture of some good teaching and preaching with a whole lot of controversial speculations now please hear me out

I'm not saying that we shouldn't care about what's going on in the world today we should neither am I saying that we can't know the facts about what's happening in the news we can neither am I saying that it's wrong to have a guess or an opinion about what may happen but the problem with these teachers in Ephesus was that they were confidently affirming they were boldly proclaiming even though they didn't truly know for certain what they were talking about and I think that part is key many big end times teachers and discernment ministry teachers are often boldly proclaiming confidently affirming this is how it's going to go in the future I've got all the pieces arranged properly and figured out yet do they really know if such and such an event in the news is a precursor to a bible prophecy soon to be fulfilled

I'm skeptical and I've been guilty of this myself when I first came out of bible college I was like a bulldog in a china shop when it came to end times and bible prophecy and I was so deeply disappointed if I discovered that some other person over here didn't come to the same view that I had the same speculations that I had and so based on what Paul says to Timothy here if we have theories if we have guesses if we have opinions we should hold them as theories guesses opinions we should hold them with open hands we should be willing to let go of them we should not be eager to promote them and convince others this is the truth and we shouldn't get offended when people don't buy into those hunches those ideas that we have at the end of all things

[ 42 : 38 ] God will keep every word of his promises no doubt about that he will prove his matchless wisdom and his sovereign power let's make an effort to relegate the controversial speculations to their place these things as Paul said do not get us where God wants us to be as a church they don't further God's work let's not be concerned so much about what's happening way out there what's going to happen tomorrow as Jesus said let's be focused on today let's be focused on loving our neighbor this community that he's placed us in let's be focused on the good news of Jesus the gospel that main message if we want to be a healthy church a healthy local household of God these are the things we need to do we need to check our hearts we need to check our focus and priorities we need to cut out controversial speculations and the sources that promote them because we've been entrusted with the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed

God this is our message and it's really good news and it's what we want to be known for as a church more than anything else let's pray father in heaven thank you for your word and sometimes it does cut deeply into us and I do pray lord that you would help us see how these words apply to each one of us personally we don't want to be off the path we want to be right where you want us to be as a church we want to be declaring your love for people who are lost and your salvation which you offer through Jesus I pray that you would do that work in us that you would lead us to that place that you would strengthen us as a church that there wouldn't be any among us who leave off of a sincere faith but that each one of us would be there walking with you and that our love would grow for each other and for you we ask this in Jesus name amen