

Losing My Religion

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Please turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 4. 1 Timothy chapter 4, the passage that Dave read this morning, will be our text for this morning's sermon.

If you're new or just visiting, passing through, please have my welcome. It's a beautiful day in Squamish, is it not? And I'm glad you've taken some time to worship with us here, with the saints that are gathered in Squamish.

For the summer, we've been doing a series on what we believe and why we believe it. However, the next two sermons, I decided that we're going to take on a little bit of a different subject.

The topic, which seems to be a little bit of a hot-button item in Christian evangelicalism, is a topic or a subject known as deconstructionism.

Deconstructionism. Deconstructionism is defined, or it's a catchy title, to define those who once identified as Christians, who no longer identify as Christians.

[1 : 14] So there's been this term that has come out in the last couple of years, called they have deconstructed. In fact, there's websites, email groups, Facebook groups, dedicated to some of the people to come together and talk about why they used to be Christians and why they are now.

And yeah, some of the people's reasons seemed very good, well and rational, but others are simply sad and heartbreaking at the same time.

I think for many of you, if you've walked in the faith for any length of time, you have met, know someone, or perhaps even related to, a loved one, a family member, or a close friend that once identified with you, was a member of the faith with you, came to church with you, attended Bible study with you, attended Sunday school, any aspect of Christian faith, they were all in.

And then for some reason, one or another, they no longer were in. I can say that the majority of people that I know were the ones that I grew up with in the church, who at one point espoused all the things that I believed, and at one way or another, at some time, they departed from the faith. These were men and women that I attended youth group with, went to camp with, when I went to university, joined Christian ministry, were part of my Bible study. But then once, every so often, they disappeared.

[2 : 54] It seems that once they moved out of the house, they came under different influences and fell away, whether it be friends influence, work influence, or just university influences.

If you know what I'm talking about, you know it is a sad point in a Christian life, with one who you thought was going to be with you till the end, no longer walks with you.

Turns out, one of my old friends did their doctoral studies on this exact subject. Why do people leave the faith? After doing hundreds of interviews, they came up with five specific reasons that showed up.

And I think I've mentioned this at different parts of the years that I've been here. But one, the first reason that most people tend to lose the faith is they're told that there are mistakes in the Bible. So essentially, they grew up believing that the Bible was perfect, and someone was able to show a seemingly error in the Bible, which caused them to distrust their faith, distrust their background.

[3 : 59] Two, they become to think that science and the Bible are incompatible. They don't mesh together. So that starts a crisis of faith.

The third reason that was given is what's called New Age communication. We live in a digital world, and there's a lot of different points of reference and information that come into the home.

And many young people are exposed to some of this atheistic teaching, or dare I say, demonic teaching that is online. They are undiscerning, and they fall victim to it.

And the two last reasons is one, either a pastor, elder, perhaps a youth leader hurt their feelings, or the fifth reason is a Christian friend hurt their feelings.

They believe that they were in a utopia in the church, and if someone could hurt their feelings, then this wasn't an organization to be a part of. What's interesting, there's been plenty of studies done on this subject, and I'm going to refer to them in a bit.

[5 : 02] But first, I want you to turn with me to the text, because I believe, more than any other text of Scripture, this deals with this issue. This deals with this issue.

And you're going to see, it's pretty clear and plain why it happens. So take a look at me at 1 Timothy 4, and I'm going to read the first four verses for you. Before I go, let me pray.

Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we just thank you for the gift of your word, this special revelation that you have deposited into our lives, that there is no need to take surveys to seek answers from men, that you have indeed given us many, if not most of the answers we will ever seek.

Father, I pray for my words. They'd come out clear. I pray for hearts and minds to understand. I think at some point, everyone here, if they've been a Christian for any extent of time, has asked this question, has had this experience of a friend who was so close, closer than a brother or a sister, would leave the faith and ultimately leave the friendship.

It is a heartbreaking experience. It is a painful experience. But Father, I pray that you would dispense your wisdom upon us by this understanding of Paul's words to his apostle Timothy as he ministered at the church of Exodus 2,000 years ago.

[6 : 48] In your name, amen. So let's take a look at verse 1. Paul says, 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 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from food that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. For it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

Just to give us a little bit of background, I'm just going to give you a quick recap of 1 Timothy.

Basically, Timothy is an apostle or not an apostle.

He's a disciple of Paul. Paul, who is an apostle? Paul had pastored in this church of Ephesus and visited many times. He had left. He had appointed elders.

But they started to go askew. And so Paul sends in Timothy to help straighten things out again. So this book is known as one of the pastoral epistles.

[8 : 11] And what Timothy found out that there was false teachers that had entered into the church. There were unqualified teachers, people who were teaching, serving as elders, who had no business being elders or teachers of God's word.

What happens is when you have unqualified leaders, you then have unqualified servants. So there was other people started serving who should not have been serving according to the qualifications laid out in scripture.

In fact, it got so bad that the gospel wasn't presented. And in fact, a false gospel began to be taught. And many people who were thought to be believers were walking away from the faith.

So that's kind of what Paul writes. Timothy, this is going to be one of the first letters, the other being 2 Timothy, that's going to help him with the wisdom to get things straightened out.

So the first thing that I want you to see this morning, and I want you to understand, and this may be surprising to you, is that when our friends, family, those we may have loved who walked with us and walked away, it's nothing new.

[9 : 24] It's nothing new. Right from the beginning, as we read in verse 1, Paul says, people will depart from the faith. Notice verse 1. Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times, some will depart from the faith of God.

This has already been foreknown by God. It's going to happen. It will always be happening. It is sad, but it is a fact of the Christian walk.

Some will walk, and some will leave with us. The fact of the matter is, the greatest person who ever lived on this earth, Jesus Christ himself, who walked in miracles, was the kindest, the most loving, the most generous of anybody who could have walked, was God incarnate in the sun, walked this earth.

And what did people do? They left. Even one of his most inner circle, Judas, just didn't leave, betrayed him. We read in even Paul's epistles, there was Demas, and others who walked as disciples, but they chose at one point to no longer be disciples.

In fact, we read in John 6:66, when Jesus really challenged them, of their faith, many walked away. Jesus himself warned in Matthew 24:10, that many would fall away and betray one another.

[11:01] Paul predicted, or warned the church in Acts 20, 29, he says, 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.

Now, I want you to pay attention to the word depart. It's interesting because it is a voluntary action. That means they did not involuntarily leave, they did not accidentally fall out of the faith, but they purposely removed themselves from the position originally occupied to another position.

They were believers, now they are choosing to be not believers. Are you with me on that? They're choosing to do so. It is a deliberate action. It is a purposeful action.

Does not mean that believers who have saving faith can lose it. We know that is impossible, but what it does mean is someone who once claimed to be Christian has renounced Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

If you need to be reminded, what is the one way you blaspheme the Spirit is to state and believe that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God.

[12:28] That is known as the unpardonable sin. I believe this person is perfectly described for us in Luke 8, 13. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy.

But these have no root. They believe for a while, and in time of testing, fall away. You see, this is not someone who is struggling to believe, but one who willfully abandons the biblical faith they had once professed.

I was just talking to a friend the other day who at one point of her life, she did depart from the faith, but she's come back. And when you go through her story, her story isn't that she wanted to depart. There was just a series of discouraging parts to her life that overwhelmed her, that led her to a life of sin, but she never denied Christ, and now thankfully she is back in the fold.

And I'm going to explain why and how that happens. Now I want to answer the question, when does this happen? Notice it makes reference to later times.

[13:36] Whenever we see times, later times, it's a reference from the time of Jesus ascending to heaven and Jesus coming again. So there's going to be this period which we live in, some call the church age, when it makes a reference to these times.

It doesn't mean just the time when Paul was ministering, but it's to the time when Jesus will come again. So the second question that I want to answer is, what is the source behind these people leaving?

What is their cause? Well, Paul lays it out very clearly who is responsible for this. Let's take a look at verse one again. Some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.

Now if you have a friend who's left the faith and you went and asked them, hey, when did you start devoting yourselves to deceitful teachings and teachings of their demons? They're going to go, what? What are you talking about?

What Paul is getting at here is the root of deceitful spirits and teachings of demons can otherwise be known as bad theology.

[14:48] Bad theology. Wrong teaching of God. Wrong teaching of God's word. And when Paul is talking about the faith, he's speaking of the whole Christian teaching.

They depart from the faith. They're rejecting it all. You see, when someone preaches wrong theology, truths that are not contained in scripture, the one who is the source of this is Satan himself.

Notice, we know he is a liar. He is a deceiver. Paul, writing to this Ephesians church in Ephesians 6:12 simply says, For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

My friends, we live in a demonic battleground. So one author simply states, Apostates are not actually the victims of sophisticated university professors or false religious teachers or wickedly clever writers or speakers.

They are simply victims of demonic spirits purveying lies from the depths of hell through humans. In the Old Testament, when God was gathering Israel and if there was someone who came in teaching truths that were counter to the law of Moses, you know what they did to him?

[16:24] They killed him. They killed him because they recognized how insidious the other quote-unquote truth was. These lies were from the pit of hell.

And how do you deal with it? You kill it. Sadly, in our today's age of, hey, let's be kind. Let's be Christian. Let's give everybody an audience.

Everything is truth. You know what we do? We play around with them like they're a cute little kitten. Hey, these are ideas. Let me think about these ideas. Hey, this will be fun to think about these kind of things.

We're supposed to be charitable. We're supposed to be loving. Aren't I supposed to show meekness? We're supposed to be meekness.

To be meekness. And somehow we live in a world where if you're actually confident about a truth, you're told you are prideful and not humble. The fact of the matter is, the church, which is the pillar and buttress of truth, which Paul refers to earlier in 1 Timothy 2, states, we do not tolerate lies.

[17:37] We do not tolerate lies. So what are the tools that Satan uses? So we know the source, it's demons. What are the tools?

Verse 2, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared. Through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.

The matter of the fact is, the work of Satan is carried out by men and women who Paul characterizes as hypocrites and liars and who have a conscience that is seared.

The fact of the matter is, when you open yourselves up to false teaching, what is interesting is, they don't usually have a sign around them that says, hey, I'm a false teacher. They are far more clever than that.

They come with smiles. They come with a fresh look at faith. They'll usually attack an aspect of your faith that you have experienced some sort of pain with.

[18:41] And I say an aspect of pain. Well, someone hurt you in church. Perhaps your church was too legalistic. Perhaps it was unloving. They come with stuff we know is sinful, but obviously has not been rooted out of the church until the day of Jesus Christ comes again.

Amen? So they point to these type of things and they start to draw the people in. They will tell you they love God. They love the Bible. They're going to tell you that they come with the best of intentions.

But there is exactly a reason why Jesus Christ calls them wolves. Sadly, we have seen some pretty public washouts by some of these men who've been serving as pastors, seminary professors, and men in Christian authority.

They may look every part of the devout, pious Christian, but they do not serve God. They serve Satan. I can think of three this week, just jotting down of several just in the last year who were considered pastors by many of my close friends who have washed out, and now there's a trail of sin and immorality in their wake.

And they always start off asking certain questions. One of the questions is, did Jesus really need to die? Like, doesn't that sound cruel, that God the Father would kill his own son?

[20:13] And, oh, what a horrible father that is, right? So that's where they start. They kind of get you. You know, if you had a bad relationship with your father, you kind of start angling in.

And then you start thinking, well, my sin really isn't that bad, is it? That someone had to die on the cross for me? You know, we just sang that song, right?

We have to transfer our grace, our sin for his grace. Yeah, our sin really is that bad. It is horrible. It is sick. God is a holy God.

He cannot even be in the present. So they start asking that question. Then they start asking that question, is all sex outside of marriage really that sinful? And then they can go in about 100 different areas from there, right?

So they just start questioning God's word. And they just start with a question. I'm just going to ask you people this. And then they'll say, can we really say the Bible is inspired?

[21:14] Is the Bible really God's word? Like, of course, we got these little red letters that Jesus said. But are we actually supposed to pay attention to Paul here? You know, maybe he's human.

He's like, do you guys make mistakes? I make mistakes, he'll say. I'm sure they made mistakes too. And that's how they lure you in. Like a fisherman, you know, the little bait on the river as you're fly fishing, supposed to look like a fly, but at the end is a deadly hook.

That's how they work. That's how they operate. And if you remember, there was this movement several years ago. It came from, it was called the Emergent Church Movement.

New way to do church. We're going to go back to God. Do you guys remember the Emergent Church Movement? Do you guys remember the name Brian McLaren? He was kind of the godfather behind it.

He actually came from my church background. I actually knew his nephew and people that hung out with him. He started off with all the right orthodoxy. The exact same stuff I believed in.

[22 : 17] Exactly. Same type of church, same type of teaching. But then he started asking those questions. And then he started asking other people those questions. And what was interesting about the Emergent Church Movement is that it didn't infect liberal churches.

It infected conservative Bible churches. Churches that were once strong Bible teaching churches kind of got hooked in with this guy.

It was interesting. Several years ago, one of my friends knew him and says, hey, why don't you come out for dinner and drinks with him? He's here. He's in Toronto. And I said, thank you, no. And I just said, you know, why are you going out with him? And he just simply said, oh man, he's such a nice guy. He's such a nice guy. And the guy is. Kind of has that nice friendly beard and mustache.

He kind of looks like everybody's grandfather, the way you wish your grandfather looked. And it's funny, my friend who went down that road not only left the faith, left his family, left his marriage.

[23 : 23] Just started buying into that man-centered garbage that comes from the pit of hell. You see, when we recognize there is false doctrine, that there is something contrary to the Bible, and we begin to make excuses, we've got a problem.

We need to heed Paul's words about where do these false teachings come from. They're not from nice guys. They're not from guys that remind me of who my grandfather's supposed to be.

They're good people. No, the teachings that they espouse come from, you guys heard Chris Hamilton say it, and you're going to hear me say it, the pit of hell. It is words voiced by demons. Sadly, these men understand the facts of the gospel intellectually, and they outwardly identify with the Christian faith. But because their hearts are not with God, and they do not have the spirit to teach and protect them, they are lured away by deceitful spirits.

The question is, how are they allowed to do this? And there's a well-known pastor in Ontario. He used to be about all this kind of stuff, and just in the past year, the wizard of Oz was behind.

[24 : 48] The curtain got pulled open. It wasn't just one issue that was going on. It turns out there's a whole whack of sin that's behind. And the reason they continue to do that is because their consciences have been seared.

Do you know what conscience being seared means? God has given us this blessing of a conscience. It warns us when there's right and wrong, good and evil. When our conscience is seared, it's like a hot metal being put on a nerve, and it burns the nerve endings off.

You might have heard, remember, leprosy. What leprosy is, or what's known as Hansen's disease. What happens is the nerve endings die, and when you're kind of walking along, and you hit it, or you put your finger on the stove, your finger doesn't pull back because there's no nerve endings there to warn you that there's something going wrong.

A lot of people who do have it have stubs. They've worn down certain parts of their body. That's what these people are.

Their consciences have been seared. They do not feel guilty for what they've done. They actually feel quite good. They feel quite proud. I'm able to enlighten you unto the truth or the horridness of your faith.

[26 : 08] And what was interesting is that the reason it was able to penetrate a lot of biblical churches is because Brian McLaren preyed on those who came from legalistic backgrounds.

And legalism is an issue that the church always struggled with. It's either the liberalism or the legalism. But if you bought into that legalism and you thought, that there was this thing called works righteousness, you were open to his teaching because it made sense.

That's what he preyed on. You see, these false teachers are able to carry out their hypocrisy because their consciences just haven't been seared. They've been destroyed. The conscience, which warns us if something is right or wrong, is gone.

There is no guilt. There is no remorse. So what is ultimately the error? Let's take a look at verse 3.

This might confuse you a little bit, but verse 3, it says, Who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth?

[27 : 19] This is an example of how they were acting in Paul's day. Now, these people are clever. Satan is clever. Usually when we think of a false teacher, we think of someone coming in and saying, The Trinity is not real.

God didn't die for your sins. Jesus really isn't the Son of God. We know as soon as we hear that, Hey, they're out of here, right? We get that part. But they're more clever and more subtle than that. You see, with false teachers, they usually come in with some sort of truth to what they're calling for. Yes, it's true. Paul did say in the Bible that singleness may aid spiritual service, but that doesn't mean he was requiring everybody to not get married.

However, the devising of human means of salvation is always a hallmark of religion. What it's saying here is you're devising ways to make yourself more accepting to Christ.

You know what? I'm not going to have these foods. These certain foods, I'm going to be all vegan. I'm going to be all vegan. God's already blessed it all. He's doubly blessed bacon.

[28 : 35] But that's the point, right? But people buy into that. They think they're somewhat closer to God because I'm eating all that. Now, I know some people make a choice for health, and they're desperately lost in other ways, but that's okay.

So they start making these little rules that start making them feel a lot more better in their faith. Hey, I'm not going to hit any... You know what? Maybe I might hit a few holy temples.

Golden idols, we'll call them. Sacred cows. I homeschool. My kids are homeschooled. They're better than everybody else. I'm not saying homeschool is bad. Homeschool, hey, that's the way to go nowadays because it's just craziness in the public school.

But if you take that as some sort of elevation of pride that you are somehow esteemed more by God in the holy people, and this is what you base your salvation on or what's going on with your relationship with God, you're listening to false teaching.

I show up at church an hour early. It could be anything. We are people that have polluted. I remember this one poor lady. She was so hurt, and she had asked me for counseling, and we came over, and her biggest sin was, or her biggest issue was, someone had told her it was a sin to garden on Sunday, and it turned out Sunday was the only day she had off, and she was just wracked with guilt for like a decade of her life.

[29 : 58] I can't garden. I love to garden. You know, like someone put a false yoke on this woman. Shame for shame. We do that. We do that. Some forbid marriage.

Some, actually, some. You know, you got to have 30 kids. Some, you have to have 20. The fact of the matter is, with false teachers, there is usually something that sets them apart as being a bit more religious than you.

Just a wee bit. I never miss Sunday church. Do you miss Sunday church? You go skiing on Sundays? Just... That's actually me telling you guys not to go to ski on Sundays.

But anyway, see, what they're calling for, it almost seems good. It's so subtle. Look how much more we are willing to go with our beliefs.

In fact, one writer says, the ever-recurring heresy in the church, in every generation, men and women arise who try to be stricter than God.

[31 : 10] Who try to be stricter than God. The reality is, believers are complete in Christ and do not need to practice physical self-denial to gain salvation from sin and righteousness before God.

It's kind of funny. I got a friend, who uses a flip phone, right? Flip phone. Who uses flip phones? And he uses flip phones. Like, can you text me? No, you can't text me, right? But I like what he says.

He goes, and he was very careful. He goes, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I'm not against the other phones. I just found the screen time took up too much of my time. So for me, it was better to make that decision. But I know other people will not go take that another way.

I'm a little bit holier than you because I see no sin can really come on my flip phone, right? Sin can show up on our other flip phone. I don't even know what sin is with a flip phone anymore. It's been so great, you know? So that's how they start to think.

Now let's take a look at verse four. For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. That means bacon.

[32 : 15] For it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. You see, Paul here lays out why the guys are so wrong. Their teaching rejects divine revelation.

See, ultimately, all false teaching is a denial of God's word. God's word in this situation has already declared marriage and food to be good.

These people are trying to tell the saints in Ephesus at times that it is wrong. So this morning, in conclusion, I want to finish off this sermon by providing you some ways you can apostate-proof your life.

Apostate-proof your life and also gives you some thoughts on how you can teach your kids. Earlier, I shared with you of the results of that one study.

I really like my friend's study, but I totally wholeheartedly reject his conclusions. His conclusions were, one, don't elevate the Bible as a source of truth so much.

[33 : 24] That's what they said. In order to create your relationships, if kids are finding out they're struggling with inerrancy, instead of actually teaching your kids how to think through that aspect of what the authority, inspiration, preservation of scripture is, they advocate, well, don't put too much of an emphasis on that.

And they'll tell you that, you know, God is, the Bible is a great source of salvation, but not a really good source of information for anything else. And the other aspect they'll say is, let science have its way.

They're a more advanced way of thinking. Those suggestions that are offered are completely wrong. They say give soft answers.

The problem is, soft answers don't really accomplish much. One, never compromise on the truth. Never compromise on the truth. This is what liberalism does.

It says when we compromise that we care more for people than the word, right? They tend to make this word as this impossible, impersonal object. So, of course, you're going to love Dustin, no matter how crazy he might be in his thought process, because this is just a book, right?

[34 : 41] That's how they want you to think. That's how liberalism works. But if you truly understand that this is God's words, God's truth, God's special revelation, that God, my relationship with Dustin or anybody else, is formed and made better by my relationship with God, amen?

That's where we need to be concerned with. The vertical takes care of the horizontal, right? Love God, you will love man. If you will love man, there's no guarantee you're going to love God.

You with me on that? That's one of the things that they really emphasize. And the other piece of advice that I'd give that settles all these problems is seek discipleship, be disciplined, and be discipling others.

That's the key. That's the key. Discipleship is bringing truth. Into our lives for one another, right? Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

That's what Proverbs tells us. We need people in our lives to tell us when we're going awry, we're going askew. We were never meant to be alone with our thoughts.

[35 : 47] We are never meant to be alone with our doubts. We are never meant to be alone with our feelings. We are never meant to be alone with our pain. We are never meant to be alone with our hurts.

You see, when we have those hurts or those pains or sometimes someone, and it's happened all the time. There was this poor lady thought so wrongly of me because she thought I called her out at a church service.

I didn't even know who she was. I was just preaching a word and someone said, who told you everything about me? I've got no idea what you're talking about. But it took about three months for her to get to that point.

Hadn't been coming to church because she thinks I was calling her out. I didn't even know her.

Right? That was the Holy Spirit prompting on an area of her life. But sometimes we get in with our own thoughts and sometimes we have been hurt.

Here, newflash. Pastors can be jerks. They can. I'd like to think I've never been a jerk but I'm sure I've gotten up in the morning and been quite grumpy.

[36 : 55] Right? I didn't give a full loving answer. You might have seen me walking across where I might have had my thought on here and wasn't able to say hello. Wouldn't have been on my mind.

I'm sure someone else did not mean to hurt you at church. Sometimes that's what the relationships are created for to go and say, hey, you said that. Did you really mean that? Most of the time you're

like, I did not mean to say that.

I'm so sorry. You see, relationships which are built vertically love the horizontal. Amen? They're quick to say sorry. They're quick to say show compassion.

They're quick to say to give understanding. They're quick to be meek. But one of the biggest problems which is identified by Al Mohler when he sums up many people's issues, he says, this generation must get deadly serious about the problem of biblical literacy.

Discipleship just really isn't hanging out together. It is actually spending time in God's word together. Whether it be the women in BSF or the men in Every Man a Warrior, our relationships and friendships are created by coming around God's truth.

[38 : 07] Amen? Those are the things that we pursue. What was interesting is that, oh, I don't know, maybe this was about, every time something happens, I'm at that age where I think it was a few years ago.

It turned out it was like I was 30 and now that was like 22 years ago, right? You know, you're like, whoa! There was this big study came out. It was issued by Young Life and InterVarsity and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and they had this study called Hemorrhaging Faith and the question they asked was why and when young adults are leaving, staying, and returning to church. I still got it. I just looked it up in my office today just to make sure it was getting all the, it was this 140-page document on, has graphs on when kids leave the faith and they had this solution at the end.

You know what it was? Be disciplined. Be disciplined. It said that there's challenges. Yes, we do live in a post-modern age which is marked by deep suspicion of authority and that everyone has their own truth.

Yes, we live in an age of excessive consumerism. We're always being bombarded with everybody telling us what to do. That goes to, yes, we do live in a digital age.

[39 : 20] Young adults are exposed to information and ideas at a rate that is incomprehensible if you were to ask some of my older uncles or grandfathers, right?

And there is, there's unique life circumstances and the reality is everybody has a unique life circumstance to a point but in a lot of ways we are just the same and one of the warnings is if there was a group that was ripe for apostate teaching, this is it.

I disagree. Why do I disagree or what is the answer? Let's take a look at your Bibles in verse 6. And I'm going to preach on this next sermon.

How do we combat all these things? If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus being trained in the words of the faith and good doctrine that you have followed.

Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths. Rather, train yourself for godliness. For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

[40 : 32] The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God who is the savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

Command and teach these things, Timothy. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Until I come, devote yourselves to the public reading of scripture and exhortation to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have which was given you by the prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

Here it is. Practice these things. Immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this and by so doing you will save yourself and your peers.

[41 : 46] I cannot think of a better way that teaches and confronts this aspect of lack of discipleship than what these verses for us have.

are you being disciplined? Are you discipling? If not, then let me tell you or warn you, you might be ripe for apostasy and falling away from the truth if you are left alone to your own devices to process your thoughts, your feelings, and your emotions about your Christian faith on your own.

We need each other and that's why we have this thing called the church. Amen? Which Jesus Christ himself says, I die for the church.

Let me pray. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we just thank you for the powerful words that are in these verses, O God, your word, how they instruct us, the encouragement you offer us.

The fact of the matter is we do know people that are or have left the faith, but the tragedy is it's no mystery. It's not even a mystery on how to keep them in here.

[43 : 06] We don't need to solicit surveys. We don't need to go around and ask everybody what was the exact reason why they didn't come to church or they don't come to church anymore or they don't want to have anything to do with the faith.

Paul tells us why. God's word tells us why. But if we pursue godliness, we pursue these teachings as he uses the word to immerse ourselves in them.

That's not just my own personal study, but as we study God's word together, these are the things that keep us close to you, Jesus, and I pray that every single person here will avail themselves of this.

Father, we may be a small church, but we desire to be big in your word, big in the confidence of your truth. Father, we want lives that are lights in this dark place.

We want to have lives that reflect your truth. We want to be people who so easily can take off the world and put on you. Father, let us be a people who forgive easily, who are patient with one another, who demonstrate kindness and compassion, and we are humble with one another.

[44 : 35] That together, as we seek the knowledge of you, and it's not a deeper secret knowledge, God, you have made it all clear, comes down to whether or not we want to immerse ourselves in the knowledge that you've given us.

So, Father, I thank you for this Sunday. I thank you for every soul that is here, every family that is represented. I pray that many, if they are wandering away or asking some of the questions that are patently not biblical, I pray that they would repent, that they would see that it's the evil one that is behind it.

Father, in all things, we ask for protection from the evil one. May he protect his flock. We ask these things in your most gracious, holy, everlasting, powerful name.

Amen.