

1 Timothy 1.18-20 Stay the Course

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[0:00] We're working through 1 Timothy chapter 1, and in so, we saw as we began that Paul, the Apostle Paul, commissions Timothy with a charge in something in which he must do in the church in Ephesus where he is, where he left him.

And as we work through it, an important question I want you to consider, as Timothy has to confront false teaching within the church, so it's opposition within, is, first of all, is doctrine important? Does doctrine really matter? And second of all, is church discipline important? This is something that in more recent days in many professing churches around something that they have neglected or pushed aside or rejected.

Is church discipline really all that important? Let's take a look at our text. This morning, we will be in verses 18 to 20, but for context, we will read all of chapter 1 from verses 1 to 20.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ our hope. To Timothy, a true son in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

[1:20] As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, remain in Ephesus, that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

Now the purpose of the commandment is love, from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this, that if the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me because he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

[3:16] However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on him for eternal everlasting life.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some, having rejected concerning the faith, have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Lord, we thank you again for your word. We pray that you would guide us through your word and lead us into all truth. We pray, Holy Spirit, that you would enlighten our minds and make your word effectual to us.

And I pray that you would use, even in the preaching of your word, for your glory, for the edification of the saints, and for the advancement of your kingdom. Pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So this morning we'll be looking at, particularly at verses 18 to 20.

[4 : 35] And in these verses, the purpose of the apostle's writing is here resumed and the charge reiterated. So his writing is resumed, or his purpose is resumed, and the charge is reiterated.

So we will draw out of it the charge, conflict, and counterfeits. And divide it in three ways, easy to remember, charge, conflict, and counterfeits.

So first of all, the charge. The way in which this letter began is that the apostle Paul commissions Timothy, and that charge is here reiterated.

Now, if you notice, we're at 18. The charge begins in verse 3, but there are some verses between when the charge is first mentioned and now 18, where he resumes it.

And there is a digression. There is a digression in verses 8 to 17, which we'll get to. But then after that digression, the charge is here resumed.

[5 : 38] Notice in verse 18, it says, this charge I commit to you. So what charge? What charge does he commit to you? Well, this brings us back to verse 3, where he says, as I urged you when I went into Macedonia, remain in Ephesus, that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

The charge to teach some that they teach no other doctrine. That charge is here resumed. This charge I commit to you.

So after the digression, that digression on essentially law and gospel, the counterfeits, the false teachers misuse of the gospel, but the law is good when the law is used lawfully.

And then the gospel, and the main thrust of the gospel in verse 15, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief, is now reinforced.

The charge that he started in verse 3, while he now resumes it in verse 18, it is reinforced with the gospel power as the foundation of that charge.

[6 : 49] And then he goes on and says, son Timothy, as he also mentions. So this also recalls to us the beginning of the letter, where the apostle Paul shows endearment and exhortation towards Timothy.

Not only his endorsement of it, but his endearment and exhortation towards him, recalling the opening greeting of the letter. So the charge reiterated, we then see that Timothy is entrusted.

The wording here is committed to you. This charge that I committed to you, for it to be committed to him, it is entrusted to him, and it is entrusted, you'll see, according to, those two words there, according to, the prophecies previously made concerning you.

What's going on there? What's he referring to when he says according to? What he's saying is, Timothy is entrusted according to Timothy's calling and ministry.

His calling and ministry as a whole. Timothy's not self-appointed. So he's being entrusted according to his calling and ministry. I want to quickly point out a couple of things, which providentially we read earlier in Acts 13.

[8 : 08] Feel free to flip over there, we'll just read a couple of verses. It doesn't speak in Acts 13 about Timothy, but it does speak about Paul and how Paul and Barnabas are set apart.

So quickly over to Acts 13, verses, that will do one to three. Acts 13, 1 to 3.

Now in the church that was at Antioch, there were certain prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Menaean, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Now we see here how Paul is set apart.

Then having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away. This doesn't speak of Timothy, but we see here a procedure. And then if you'll flip over to Acts 16, we're introduced to Timothy in verses 1 to 2.

[9 : 20] Then he came to Derbe and Lystra, and behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.

And we see in verse 3 that Paul wanted to have him go on with him. Now this doesn't speak of Timothy's being set apart, and Acts doesn't narrate Timothy's being set apart as Paul was, but in 1 Timothy 4, it does point us back to that.

So 1 Timothy 4 and verse 14 says, Paul to Timothy, do not neglect the gift that is in you which was given you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

Timothy wasn't self-appointed, he was enabled, appointed with the laying on of the hands and sent. So, by Timothy being entrusted by Paul saying, I commit to you, it's according to Timothy's calling and ministry as a whole.

Now for it to be committed to Timothy, for Timothy to be entrusted, entrust means safekeeping and transmission to others. Safekeeping and then pass it on to others.

[10:41] And this is quite in contrast to the false teachers. In contrast to those self-appointed false teachers, quite the contrast to Timothy's calling and being entrusted.

And this, he lays down before very shortly gets into instruction in ordering the life of the church, which we'll see next in chapter 2.

Instruction on ordering the life of the church, but he establishes the authority before getting to it. So he says, according to the prophecies concerning you, Timothy is not self-appointed.

That's something that's very important to remember as we work through this. The false counterfeit teachers were self-appointed, but Timothy was enabled, sent, and entrusted according to what we see in Ephesians 4 of Christ's victory gifts.

Now this, in this time, there were still apostles, so we would see the extraordinary and the ordinary gifts of prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, whereas today we would see pastors and teachers.

[11:50] But what we see here is that Timothy, being enabled, set apart, appointed, and sent, and entrusted, Timothy is one of Christ's victory gifts.

Christ has gifted, enabled Timothy, and nourishes the church through him. So that brings us to our second point, that Paul commissions Timothy with authority due to the seriousness of conflict in spiritual warfare.

So our second point is conflict. Timothy is engaged in a spiritual warfare. He says, wage the good warfare.

This warfare that Timothy was engaged in is not by the edge of the sword, it's not with claymores and karambits, but if you recall from Ephesians chapter 6, it is a spiritual warfare.

And Timothy is engaged in a spiritual warfare. And the word charge that Paul uses, charge some, that word actually means in military language for a command.

[13:01] So there's already much imagery here of warfare. In spiritual warfare, there's a military charge to give a command, a strict order. And then also, later in 1 Timothy, we see that Paul tells Timothy to fight the good, fight.

The spiritual warfare is a spiritual fight. So it is not by karambits and claymore, but it is in the correction of false teachers. To wage the good warfare in the correction of false teachers.

And in war, there will be conflict. And in conflict, there will be suffering. There will be conflict. And Timothy, as well as us, as well as the church, can't make everyone's fight their own.

Timothy is not to make every fight his own. We're not called to go and make every fight our own. You can't make everyone's fight your own. We need to pick our battles. So the most important question would be which battles have come to your door?

It's not that we've gone out to find every battle and fight in every battle, but which battles have brought themselves to us? With Timothy, which battle is he faced within the doors of the church?

[14:17] Two of the big ones which really are at the root here with Timothy and are, I think, always a battle which is present in every age is both of Scripture and of justification, namely the inerrancy of Scripture, the attack, which is as old as time, is did God really say?

And there are many churches who have compromised on the inerrancy of Scripture, which is a fatal thing to do. Inerrancy of Scripture and perfection of Scripture, that it doesn't have errors, it is incapable of having error or causing error, that it is sufficient and authoritative and necessary and clear.

These are battles that are worth fighting for and need to be protected. And also justification. What causes a person to be justified before God? How is a person declared right before God?

These false teachers misuse the law by, don't know exactly what their arguments are, but there are many arguments today that try to say that we are saved by faith and works, trying to add works to our justification, or that we maybe are saved by faith, but our final justification is by our works.

Justification is simply being declared righteous once for all because of the righteousness of Christ.

And some of the attacks today that we might see, definitely beware of ideas such as the new perspective on Paul, which is a rejection of imputation, the imputation of Christ's righteousness and

justification, and names such as N.T. Wright, who are components of this, which is an attack on the doctrine of justification.

[16:02] These are battles worth fighting and need to wage the good warfare against them. So, conflict means being engaged in a spiritual warfare and, in our text here, it's of belief and conduct.

belief and conduct. First of all, he mentions faith. Faith is right belief or right doctrine. This might sound familiar.

Faith is right belief or right doctrine or, we could say, orthodoxy. So, faith is embracing the gospel of free grace. Any idea that salvation is by our works or by our deeds is not the gospel.

The gospel is by free grace that we cannot earn merit before God to cause God to love us or that we will earn a righteous standing by our works.

The only way to be in a right standing before a holy and just God is with perfect, exact, entire, perpetual obedience which we cannot earn, we cannot provide, only by Christ who was made under the law perfect, perfected the law and by being united to Christ, Christ's perfect righteousness is accredited to our account.

[17:18] It's like an accounting metaphor. You've got nothing, we've actually got a debt in our account. That debt is wiped clear and instead of a blank slate or a blank account, Christ's righteousness is accredited into our account that we can stand before a holy and just God by the righteousness of Christ, robed in Christ's righteousness, no longer having the condemnation of sin because it was paid for in full by Christ's once for all sacrifice on the cross.

This is the way of salvation, it is the only way of salvation and it's not by works. Faith is the embracing of the gospel. It's receiving Christ and the promises of salvation, embracing the gospel of free grace.

Next, a good conscience. Faith and a good conscience. So where faith is right belief or right conduct, sorry, if faith is right belief or right doctrine, good conscience is right conduct or orthopraxy and a good conscience comes from moral obedience to God which first of all requires faith in order to have our consciences cleansed by Christ and then a good conscience is continuing on in obedience to God which is the right use of the moral law is that for those who have been saved to use it as a guide, as a rule for holy living because God is holy and he requires us to live holy lives and here we have God's moral principles of how to be walking in holiness.

So faith, right belief, good conscience, right conduct. Faith and conduct are inseparable. You can't have one without the other.

Somebody who claims to have faith, who claims to have right belief, who claims to have embraced the gospel of free grace but is immersed in immoral living, does not profess true, what they profess is not true faith.

[19:14] Or a person who appears to be morally upright but without faith, they are not truly saved. Faith and conduct are inseparable because a sinner who is regenerated, who is called out of the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of light is made a new creation.

It's what we call the new birth or regeneration and given a new heart with God's law written fresh on us with the desire to do God's will and to walk in new obedience. So faith according to godliness. And in this conflict, he points out not only the failure of the counterfeit false teachers of belief and conduct but also the importance of Timothy to maintain right belief and right conduct in conflict or his character in conflict.

So he's told to maintain faith and good conscience unlike some. Now notice it's not just some generic theory that maybe somewhere in the world somebody might not be holding to it but he's starting to get specific.

He's starting to get real unlike some who have rejected faith and a good conscience. Now this word rejected, it has a sense of force to it as though thrusting something away pushing something away deliberately and in this context like rejecting a rudder if on a ship there is a rudder and somebody rejects it and just thrusts it away it's like it's rejecting the gospel.

[20:53] Now you can probably imagine living in Dryden everyone here has lived in Dryden throughout a summer that maybe you're lying in bed and you hear a sound which you know as soon as you hear it it's a mosquito and you don't know how that mosquito has gotten in the house and it won't land on you that you can smack it and it just keeps buzzing and buzzing and bouncing off your head and eventually you get so irritated you just try to push it away from you just try to thrust it away from you.

Well that's a similar thing to what these false teachers are doing to faith and good conscience. they're trying to thrust it away. They're saying I don't like being accused by my conscience so I will change my perspective of what truth is.

So in changing their perspective of truth in order to escape the accusations of their conscience they're thrusting away right belief and right conduct or faith and good conscience.

What is the result? What is the result of doing that? Well it says in our text shipwrecked. Paul uses a metaphor here of shipwreck which to us well I'll speak for myself is I have not been on a ship that has been shipwrecked.

I have not witnessed a ship to be shipwrecked. I've seen at the very least videos or pictures of ships that had been wrecked and you see the remains on the bottom of the ocean but you don't actually see the number of souls who were on the ship that ceased when it was shipwrecked.

[22 : 30] Now something that's important is that Ephesus was a major seaport of Asia Minor so when they hear shipwreck to them it would be a much more vivid understanding of what shipwreck is.

They probably would have seen a ship that had been wrecked and who have seen the carnage catastrophe and destruction that came from it or they maybe have seen a ship go out to sea and not come back.

Probably some of them knew people who went out to sea and had not come back. Maybe some of them had witnessed a shipwreck and witnessed people dying and drowning or maybe some of them even had loved ones who were shipwrecked and did not return to them.

So it is a very urgent and vivid metaphor which Paul uses here to the people of Ephesus that they would see how serious this is.

How serious it is to, as in rejecting a rudder, how serious it is to reject the gospel, to reject faith and a good conscience.

[23 : 43] Now with these false teachers, if we're to use this metaphor of a shipwreck or a ship without a rudder, they would have been false teachers so they would have been looked to for teaching.

They would have been in a position of teaching so it would have appeared as though they were on the right course. But whatever course it looked like they were on turned out to actually be catastrophe and destruction.

A shipwrecked because unstable. A shipwrecked because being unstable, faith and conscience stabilize.

As a rudder stabilizes a ship, so does faith and conscience stabilize. Faith, as we mentioned, is knowledge, assent, and trust.

So some people might ask with this, and we're trying to understand the metaphor, well when you say faith, do you mean rejecting the subjective faith of a person just doesn't believe or is rejecting faith rejecting the objective content of faith, of the gospel?

[24 : 50] Well it's both, because you can't have faith without the content of the gospel. Faith is knowledge, assent, and trust. So the subjective faith of having faith, of believing, of having confidence in the trustworthiness of something, it's based on the knowledge of the gospel, the assent, or the agreement of the gospel, and the trusting in it.

So it's both objective and subjective faith. trusting in God's word. And conscience is by virtue of us being made in the image of God, being made in the image of God, God's law, God's natural law is written on the heart.

So do not reject faith and a good conscience. So being unstable and exposed to many winds and storms. A ship wreck, that is a ship that is unstable, is ship wrecked when it is exposed to many winds, storms.

So what should a church be? When we consider this metaphor, what should a church be? This is a sin-cursed world, and even believers who have been saved and whose conscience has been cleansed from the burden of sin, believers still undergo the sorrows and sufferings of a sin-cursed world, which means we will find ourselves in storms.

Now, the church is supposed to stay the course. If a person is in a church or an institution which calls itself a church and is in hopes of that staying the course to help them get them through the storms of life, but when the storms come up and the winds are so high you can't even see your course where you're wanting to be going, and the winds are so strong that you can't control it, and you've rejected a rudder, you've thrust away the rudder, so you have no control over the ship, and

you have no bulwarks.

[26 : 43] We sang of a bulwark this morning of the walls that protect the ship from strong waves. The ship is tossed around by every wind.

The church without a rudder is tossed around by every wind of doctrine. And those who are in what calls itself a church but has rejected what is necessary to stay the course in a storm will find themselves shipwrecked.

So in these times where there are storms and where they do feel overwhelmed and where they do feel afraid because the waves are so high and they can't even see over them, they've probably lost their hope, and they feel tossed around by every wind and every storm.

If it's not a true church, if it doesn't hold to faith and good conscience, they will be shipwrecked and where they need help the most, they will find themselves with no hope, they will find themselves with no joy, they will find themselves with nothing.

For the ship that they thought would stay the course is but shattered in pieces and they're left overwhelmed in the ocean with nothing. However, as the church is called to not compromise but to hold to faith and good conscience as a strong rudder wood and a bulwark enabled to when in the storms, when the waves are so high and we can't see land or the clouds are so dark that it's as though it's night and we can't see stars, to stay the course by that rudder, to stay the course by holding to faith and good conscience, to stay the course through the storms.

[28 : 20] And that's what Ephesians 4 prevents. Ephesians 4 prevents the church from being shipwrecked.

If you remember in Ephesians 4 with Christ's victory gifts so that the church will not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. So Christ's victory gifts are to enforce, fortify, and enforce the church to prevent being tossed by every wind of doctrine, to be built up in unity of faith.

So with this understanding of shipwreck, this metaphor of shipwreck, in both Ephesians 4 of not being tossed around by every wind of doctrine, as well as the metaphor here of shipwreck, we can see that there's urgency.

There's urgency, seriousness, and solemnness to the task at hand of the spiritual warfare in which there is conflict. So we are not called to go looking for conflict, but to be prepared to confront it when it is present.

Martin Lloyd Jones, who delivered lectures on preaching and preachers, and those lectures were made into a book, which is quite good. In that book, he warns against preachers who are constantly looking to be preaching polemics, because polemics is interesting and it attracts people, but then once it's attracted people for polemics, there's this need or this drive to continually be in this conflict or in this confrontation in these battles.

[29 : 57] But that's not what the church is called to do and it's unhealthy. We're warned not to be obsessed with it, but to be prepared for it when it comes to us. Which brings us to our third point.

That character in conflict is crucial when contending with counterfeits in the church. Counterfeits. the counterfeits which have the opposition which has come within.

It was actually already there. The conflict which was within. So the opponents, those who oppose or distort right view of the gospel or right view of God and consequently are shipwrecked.

Now he says certain people. It's not ambiguous. It's not, you know, maybe somewhere in the world somebody might have to deal with it at some time. No, he's getting specific now. It's a certain people, some, and he becomes explicit in his identification of them.

Because these certain people or these some, they pose a serious threat to the unity of the church. And so he calls them out by name. He calls them out by name and they were false teachers there, which means they knew them.

[31 : 12] Maybe when he went, so this letter was to be written, or so it was to be read out loud. When it was read out loud, maybe people were doing the sideline to see, is Hymenaeus here?

But he calls them out by name, first of all, Hymenaeus. Hymenaeus, we don't see just in this text, but he's mentioned again in 2 Timothy 2.17.

And Hymenaeus, we see in 2 Timothy 2.17, was saying that the resurrection had already happened. And I think, well, what's the big deal? What's his point?

Why would he say the resurrection already happened? Well, if the resurrection had already happened, then that would mean that believers are in a state of glory and had been perfected in a state of holiness and are incapable of sinning, and therefore there would be no condemnation for

actions, which would be devastating, shipwrecked from rejecting a good conscience and the faith. So Hymenaeus is called out by name, and then Alexander. This is possibly, it doesn't say specifically, but it may possibly be Alexander the coppersmith, who's mentioned in 2 Timothy 4, 14 to 15, and in there he's called out by name as well.

[32 : 32] So by publicly calling them out by name, there's some things that are implicit in this. First of all is that they would have been well known.

To call them out by name, people would know who they are. If, especially in an age where there's no internet, if someone was to say, beware of this person, but that person lived halfway across the country, and no one had ever heard of them, or they ever will, it's irrelevant.

But the fact that they're calling them out by name is that they need to know that this person is a threat and is damaging. So they're called out by name, they would have been well known and they would have been influential.

Why do false teachers have a hearing? Because they are influential people. They are probably good speakers, they are nice people, they attract others to listen to them. They're well known and they're influential.

They're possibly leaders in the church. I say possibly, but in this case, they would have been leaders in the church. They were false teachers in the church, self-appointed and they were probably the ones in Acts 20.

[33 : 47] In Acts 20, Paul, the elders, brings together the elders and he says that some from even amongst yourselves will rise up. So they possibly, Hymenas and Alexander may possibly have been those who would have been elders in the church since before Timothy's arrival.

And clearly, the fact that they're called out by name is clearly they did not go away. People need to be publicly warned because they did not go away.

So the counterfeits, we see the opponents, they're called out by name and then we see the opponents stopped. So the counterfeits are opponents and now the opponents are stopped.

He says delivered over to Satan. What does that mean, delivered over to Satan? It means removed from the church and within the church is Christ's domain, removed from the church and put back into the world, which is Satan's domain.

So removed from Christ's domain and put back into Satan's domain, which means they are no longer part of the Christian community or Christian fellowship. That doesn't mean that they can't hear the word preached, but they're no longer a part of that community and fellowship.

[35 : 06] And this excommunication, this church discipline of excommunication, as he says, delivered over to Satan, it's corrective, it's remedial. If you notice in the text, it says that they may learn.

It's not merely for the sake of punishing them, but it's corrective that they may learn. It's remedial in hopes of restoration, in hopes of their repentance and restoration, in hopes that the shame will bring them to repentance and upon repentance be brought to restoration.

But Timothy is to purge the false teaching because the false teaching is contaminating the church. Purge the false teaching so as to not contaminate the church.

Now, when a ship, this metaphor that he uses of a shipwreck, a ship is never without any occupants. Well, I shouldn't say never. I guess it could probably drift away. But the way the metaphor is implied is that the ship has occupants.

It's not just that there's damaged property that sinks to the bottom of the ocean, but there's occupants. And it's not just the captain who's the occupant. There's all those who are on board who suffer because of the shipwreck.

[36 : 24] There is necessity and commitment to proper church discipline. In Titus 3. 10, it says, reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

So what he's saying to Timothy is that Timothy is to excommunicate the unrepentant false teachers, to purge the false teaching so that they do not further contaminate the church.

So some concluding uses to take out of this. First one is one of the questions I asked at the beginning, is doctrine really all that important?

There are a lot of churches that they see there are different teachings or people with different doctrines and there's going to be conflict, so in order to mediate that conflict and have a quote-unquote unity, they just reduce their standard of doctrine or they reduce their confession of

faith so that it's more inclusive of everyone's beliefs.

So is doctrine really all that important? Well, what is it exactly that we're talking about? What are we talking about here? Are we talking about somebody's preference of the color of paint they use in their living room when they paint their house?

[37 : 47] No. What is at stake? What is at stake in our text? What is at stake in a shipwreck? What we're talking about is souls, human souls.

We're talking about eternal salvation. We're talking about the words of life, spiritual nourishment, the only true comfort, hope, or joy. So Joel Osteen, for example, his followers will find none of this in his teaching.

They will find no salvation. They will not find the words of life. They will not find spiritual nourishment. They will not find true comfort, hope, or joy because Christ is not there.

The significance of having these Christ's victory gifts, having been enabled, appointed, and sent, is because what goes on in church, we see from the promise of scripture that where there is a true church, where there is true preaching of the word, and the due administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline, that there is Christ in the midst, spiritually, presence of Christ, which means Christ is spiritually present in the preaching of the word, Christ is spiritually present in the hearing of the word, and Christ is spiritually present in the understanding of the word, and that Christ is at work through the means of grace.

grace. So that's what we want to be accomplished. That's what goes on in corporate worship. But as soon as we take out Christ's commands, we take Christ out of worship.

[39 : 23] And if we take Christ out of worship, then the means of grace are accomplished. For the word to be made effectual, it requires the spirit of God to make the word effectual.

So, yes, is doctrine really important? It is. And a church leader or a teacher, such as these counterfeits, who are not enabled, called, appointed, and affirmed, are not what we see in Ephesians 4 of Christ's victory gifts.

So that means that they are not truly Christ's gifts of pastors and teachers. So if they're not that, then what are they? Well, at best, they are clouds without water, which are, in this case, useless. At worst, they are wolf in sheep's clothing, having rejected the faith in a good conscience, or on course to shipwreck themselves and shipwreck all those who listen to them. So, second concluding use, and the other question which I asked at the beginning in the introduction, is church discipline really all that important?

There are a lot of churches who don't want to do it, maybe because of all the relations, or because of family members, or because they're nice people, or they're not, they think, well, maybe I think they are a Christian, so they decide not to exercise church discipline.

[40 : 50] Are these churches right? Is church discipline really all that important? John Dagg, who was a 19th century Baptist theologian, he wrote, when discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it.

He wrote this in the 18th century, and people still refer to it, so people still agree with it, that when discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it.

When a church fails to exercise biblical church discipline, they abandon a commitment to Christ's authority. The Belgian Confession lays out the three marks of a true church, which I already mentioned, but the pure preaching of the word, the due administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline.

When you remove church discipline, you remove Christ's authority over the church. When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it. Now, to kind of paint the picture a little bit better of this delivering over to Satan, the way into church membership is through baptism.

And baptism is a sign of fellowship with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection of being engrafted into him, of remission of sins, and of giving up oneself unto God through Jesus Christ to live and walk in newness of life.

[42 : 11] Baptism is the entrance into church membership. Baptism is a sign of this, of fellowship with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. And this is from the perspective of the one being baptized, but it's the church that's baptizing them.

So from the perspective of the church and doing the baptizing, baptism is a church's affirmation of a credible profession of faith. So the church affirms that their profession of faith is credible, and that they do have fellowship with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, and that is entrance into

church membership.

Now, when we now look to the other end with excommunication, as he says, delivered them over to Satan, the final step of church discipline, we see a procedure in Matthew 18, first go to your brother if he doesn't listen, bring others, and then bring it to the church.

The final step of church discipline, which would be excommunication, the removal of a church member, the final step is the opposite of baptism.

The final step is the reversal of baptism. It's the church, so where baptism is the church affirming, a credible profession. The final step of church discipline, excommunication, is the church saying we do not affirm the person's profession on account of unrepentant, intentional compromise on faith or conscience, namely for matters of heterodoxy and heteropraxy, right belief and right conduct.

[43 : 45] So you might think, okay, well, maybe there is this situation and this person should be excommunicated, but I'm not convinced they're not a Christian. I think they probably are, Christian. So should they not be excommunicated?

That isn't the criteria which the Bible lays before us. The criteria which the Bible lays before us is, are they in unrepentant sin? And if you've gone through Matthew 18 and they remain in unrepentant sin, whether you think they're a Christian or not, Christ's commands are Christ's commands.

And excommunication, to excommunicate, it means being barred from the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is for members. That means not being treated as one of the body, and it means no longer having those casual interactions that you would with community members.

So any conversations that are had with them would be calling them to repentance. repentance. So you might say, well, that's not really all that loving, or that's not very inclusive.

Well, I have some questions to answer that. First of all, is it loving to allow the people in the church to be starved and to be led to catastrophe, such as a shipwreck?

[44 : 56] Is it loving to allow gangrene to be spread, or to allow poison to be spread throughout the church? Is it loving to see someone headed for destruction and to not appeal to God's prescribed response?

When such person is excommunicated and delivered over to the domain of Satan, the church isn't just loving God by obeying God. The church isn't just loving the congregation by purging the false teaching and protecting the congregation.

The church is also loving that unrepentant sinner, because there is still time for repentance and restoration. and to not end up being delivered over into Satan's realm for an eternity where there will be no opportunity for repentance.

So it is loving to God, it is loving to the church, and it is loving to the unrepentant sinner, which is why we see in verse four, he says, now the purpose of the commandment is love, from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith.

Timothy has been entrusted to pastor the church. Timothy has been charged to stop the false teachers and purge the church of false teaching. Timothy, excommunicate the false teachers.

[46 : 13] If somebody isn't prepared to follow through with church discipline, then that person is not fit to be, to be, they're not fit for church office, because they're not in submission to Christ's authority, and they do not truly love the people enough to prevent them from catastrophe, and they do not truly love the unrepentant sinner enough to try to bring them to repentance while there is still time, according to God's method.

So the third and final concluding use, the church militant is called to action. In warfare, there is opposition, and in opposition, there is suffering.

The term church militant, there's the church militant, and the church triumphant. The church militant is the church on earth. The church triumphant is the church glorified in eternity.

So the church militant is called to action. When a counterfeit's false doctrine is exposed, those false teachers, those counterfeits, instead of appealing to the gospel or to the sufficiency of scripture, because those things only expose their error, so when these false teachers and counterfeits are exposed, instead of appealing to the gospel, what they end up doing is they accuse you of being divisive, or they accuse you of being unloving, or that the sin is in pointing out another person's sin. So there will be conflict for the church militant, but the church must remember that false teaching is damaging. So because it is damaging, it would be cruel for the church to permit it or endorse it.

[47 : 54] It would be negligent for the church to permit it or endorse it. It would be unfaithful of the church to permit it, and it would be unloving of the church to permit and endorse false teaching.

False teaching in our day, false teaching in Timothy's day, was an attack against the gospel. They rejected the faith, and they rejected a good conscience, rejected the gospel.

And the main thrust of the gospel, if you remember, in verse 15 is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. The gospel is the truth in which the church stands or falls, and the doctrine of justification by faith.

If a church compromises on that because of false teaching, then Christ is not there. There is not pure preaching of the word. Nor can a person be saved without an understanding of the gospel. False teaching that may assert being justified because of self-righteousness or adherence to the law or because of purebred genealogy will be condemned and left in their sins.

[48 : 57] The only way of salvation is by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, by receiving Christ, by resting in Christ alone for salvation because of Christ's work of redemption on our behalf.

So if you have not yet received Christ and rested on Christ, if you have rejected faith and good conscience, turn to Christ, trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Let's pray. Thank you.