

Title: A Charge To Keep

Text: I Timothy 1:3-20

Take your Bibles, please, and turn with me to I Timothy chapter 1. Last Sunday, we began a series of messages from this little, yet, powerful book. This book was written by Paul to his brother in Christ, Timothy. Timothy is the Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Ephesus. And Paul is writing to him and telling him how the church should be run. There are notes in your bulletin. I invite you to us them as we study the Word of God together.

(Read I Timothy 1:3-20)

### Prayer

(1A) Now, we are looking at Paul's Charge Concerning Doctrine in verses 1 thru 20. (1B)

Last week we began with an INTRODUCTION as we looked at Paul in Vs 1; and Timothy in Vs 2. Two wonderful men of God. Then we looked at the goals of the church as explained in Vs 5.

Now, today I want to look at two things. (2B)First, I want to look at the instruction that Paul gave to Timothy concerning false doctrine and false teaching. (3B) Secondly, I want to look at Paul's testimony in verses 12-20.

(2B) O.K. Paul's instruction concerning false doctrine. I don't believe I ned to remind you that we live in a time of falsehood. Man's word is no longer secured with a hand shake And if you buy something significant, you have to sign hundreds of documents to seal a bargain.

And of course with all the confusion we hear concerning the subject of "truth", what is one to believe? The Bible warns us that in latter days many will come to deceive us and try to lead us away with false words. So, we need to look carefully at this charge that

*Paul gives to Timothy Concerning false teachers. There are four things that I want you to see.*

(1 ) I would like you to notice, first of all, in Vs 3, the charge that was given to Timothy.

Paul says: "That you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines." The word "strange" means of different kind. Or, different from the whole concept of the Word of God

Dear friends, it is wrong to teach anything that has no Biblical foundation. If what we say, in our opinion, and we present this opinion as being God's will, and this opinion cannot be supported and confirmed by the Word of God, then it is another doctrine of a different kind. It is not the doctrine of the Word of God. Very important.

I remember talking with a woman who claimed that the Holy Spirit had spoken directly to her. And yet, what she said the Spirit told her was in direct opposition to the teaching of the Word of God. Dear friends, we need to be aware of false teachings. We need to remember that when the Holy Spirit does speak to us it will in no way contradict what is said in the Bible. We read that in "later times many will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and false doctrines. "

2 ) Secondly, notice the character of these false teachers. Two things I want you to see

(1 ) Beginning at Vs 6 Paul says "For some men, straying from these things." NOW, WHAT THINGS? The things mentioned in Vs 5: "Love from a pure heart ... a good conscience .. a sincere faith." The point is that some folks were straying from these things, having turned aside to fruitless discussions. Some have turned aside because they have departed from a love that comes from a pure heart. others have turned from good conscience. And others have turned from a sincere faith.

My friends, please listen, if your faith is not sincere, if there is hypocrisy connected with it, you are walking on very dangerous grounds. Because you have opened up yourself

to all kinds of departure from the truth. And it will be easy for Satan to capture your heart and mind if you have turned aside from "a sincere faith."

Dear friends, if we cannot say with all of our hearts and with the confidence of our minds that we believe what God's Word teaches, that it is the power of God unto Salvation, that we believe that Jesus Christ is actually alive today, if we in any way turn aside from 'THE FAITH', we open up ourselves to all kinds of false doctrine and teachings. (2 )Secondly, concerning the character of these false teachers, notice they turned aside to 'FRUITLESS DISCUSSION.' Literately, it is saying "wasted talk." I wonder how much wasted talk is going on in the name of Christianity. "Fruitless discussion" because people have turned aside from a "sincere faith."

You know, it is so easy for Christians to fall into this trap. Instead of having an honest and sincere and pure conscience before God and a sincere faith, we talk with one another about religious things and it is just wasted discussion. Because the Spirit of God is not in it. It is just human reasoning.

(3 ) Third, Did you pick up on the content of their teaching? The content. Notice, the last part of Vs 3: "In order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies."

(1 )Myths. Dear friends, may we never turn aside nor pay attention to myths. In other words, do not give one consideration. Maybe you have witnessed to someone and he wants to argue about all the so called contradictions in the Bible. DON'T PAY ATTENTION. Don't give one inch. Don't give a person a chance to tell you about the so called myths of the Bible, because frankly there are non.

It was the Jews who wanted to go through their genealogies and to trace them back to the beginnings. But, I am reminded what the Bible teaches that the letter of the law kills, but the spirit gives life. And if in our Bible studies, and in our Sunday School classes and even in the preaching of the Word, if our desire is just to gain intellectual knowledge then we will miss so much of what the Spirit wants to teach. For it is the Spirit that gives life. It takes the Holy Spirit of God in the life of a believer to understand the principles of God's Word. So, the content of their teaching was myths and endless genealogies.

3) But, also notice, in Vs 7, it says that "they wanted to be teachers of the law, even though they did not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions." In other words, they wanted to teach. But, they couldn't. WHY? Because they didn't have the Spirit of God in their life. It is as simple as that.

Now, there are some today who will continue to teach the Law. Let me ask you a question: WHAT IS THE LAW FOR? Paul tells us in Vs 8: "the law is good, if one uses it lawfully."

In Romans chapter 7:14, Paul says: "For we know that the law is spiritual, but we are of flesh, sold into bondage to sin."

Dear friends, the law is not the answer to living productive Christian life. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Christ is the completion, the final fulfillment, the great standard of all. But, never forget, the law is still spiritual and binding on the Christian. Not for salvation. But, for doing what Jesus told us to do.

Now, the problem in Paul's day, as well as in our day, is that some folks continue to preach that salvation comes through the law. As if a person by the things that he or she does or the things that he or she doesn't do will somehow be acceptable to God. And dear friends, that is impossible. For the Bible clearly tells us in Vs 9: "that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious." And then the law is given for the list of sins that are mentioned in Vs. 9-10.

The question is WHY? Because the law is a school master, says Galations 3:24, to lead us to Christ that we maybe justified. HOW? BY FAITH You see, we are justified by faith not by the law. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Dear friends, it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit that we need in our life. The law will not save. The law will not keep a church pure and free from the world. The law is a school master. It is to bring us to Christ, where we will see that it is His life substituted for ours that is our great need. It is the life of Christ in us which becomes

our standard and causes us to live a productive Christian life. And may we never forget that tremendous truth

Let me illustrate. A person ask me a question related to the law. She ask: "Pastor, what do you believe about tithing?" She said: "The Bible teaches tithing. Malachi chapter 3:10 says: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse and test me now in this, says the Lord of Hosts." Pastor, what do you believe about tithing?

I reminded her that Jesus taught in Matthew to some Pharisees who were preaching the law and the tithe, that Jesus said: "this you ought to have done and more." And I reminded her that the standard under the love of Christ is greater than the standard under the O.T. law.

The point is that it is the love of Christ within us that is the highest standard of all. And His love will supersede the law every time. And it has been my experience that people will give and give and give, far more than 10%, when the love of Christ is controlling their life.

As the poet says: "And must I be giving and giving again? OH, No!, says the angel, piercing me though. Just give till the Lord stops giving to you."

(4C) Well, what were the consequences of all this false teachings? Look at Vs 4: "The result of false teaching gives rise to myths and endless genealogies which led to mere speculation rather than furthering God's provision which is by faith."

"God's provision." Now, what does that mean? The word "provision" comes from a root word in the Greek meaning "to build up" or "to edify". You know, there is a real difference, isn't here, in just receiving knowledge into the head; and being built up in *in Christ. There is a real difference.*

Do you know that you are growing "in the Lord", or, are you just accumulating facts? That is what is happening right now. You are either growing "in the Lord", or, you are just accumulating facts about Jesus.

Put, please notice, what Paul is saying. "God's provision which is by faith." In other words it operates in the sphere of faith. A person's life is built up through faith. Not simply the accumulation of facts.

Dear friends, I believe we ought to memorize scripture. But, memorizing a verse will never take the place of faith in that verse.

I remember one time teaching on the verse in Psalm 119, where it says: "Thy Word have I hide in my heart that I might not sin against thee." And one dear man who had just come to Christ was seating in that class and the Spirit of God taught him something and he shared it with the class. He said, "Pastor, doesn't it say in John chapter 1 that the WORD IS CHRIST?"

I said, "that is right. That is the intent of John 1:14 where it says that "the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us."

And he said, "Man, that is wonderful. They Word have I hide in my heart. The living Word, meaning Christ."

And I thought as I left that class that I could have said to that new Christian. "Well, you know, brother, that that refers to the Bible." But, I didn't God's Spirit showed that <sup>mean</sup> ~~mean~~ something. And I left that class realizing that the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. And there was a gentlemen that had just come to Christ and that verse from Psalm, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart", meant Christ to him. It is thrilling, isn't it? God's

wonderful provision. Building up which is in faith. Dear friends, do not be pulled away by strange doctrines and false teachers. but, be built up in the faith by God's wonderful provision. WHY? Because as Paul says in Vs 11, "We have been entrusted with the glorious gospel of the blessed God." PRAISE THE LORD.

(3B) Now, let's come to Paul's testimony. In verses 12-20 Paul literally explodes into a joyous celebration of his own personal relationship with Jesus Christ Paul, really, never got too far away from his conversion experience. And the principle that hit me right between the eyes in this personal testimony was the assurance that if Christ could change Paul's life, he can change anyone's life. Paul, a blasphemer, a persecutor of the church, a man of violence, was singled out by Jesus for service in the he Kingdom of God. Paul was saved to serve. And, dear friends, so are we.

Let me share with you five things about the life of Paul from these verses.



(1C) First of all, Paul's strength. Vs 12 says: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me." Where does our strength come from to live the Christian life? Well, it had better come from the Lord. If it doesn't, we will fail. It is Christ who strengthens us and prepares us for the task of service. Paul said in Philippians: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

(2C) Secondly, notice Paul's passed experience. He says in Vs 13: "even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor." This verse reminds us that no one is outside the love of God. Isn't that wonderful? God desires that all should come to repentance. Paul was a blasphemer, a persecutor of the church. Here was a man with a passed experience. Who we would say, "How can God save Him." But, God loved Paul. And God introduced himself to Paul one day, and Paul came to Christ.

I don't know what the feeling of your heart is today. Maybe you feel beyond the love of God. You wonder if God could do for you what He did for Paul. My dear friends, it is the same Lord. It is the same Lord looking for an open heart. And no matter what has been your past, or what has been your experience, God is willing to forgive. WHY! Because his Son Jesus paid for all your sins. And I praise God for that wonderful truth.

(3C) Third, notice in Vs 14-15, the excellence of God's grace. Paul tells us that God's grace is abundant. Vs 14 says: "and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus."

WHAT IS GRACE? Grace is all that God will ever give to us, which we don't deserve. That is what grace is. Grace, also, refers to something that is given with no thought of anything in return. It comes as a gift. Grace is often compared with mercy. Mercy means

that God holds back what we really deserve. We really deserve death and separation from God. But, because of God's mercy he holds this back and gives to us his wonderful grace.

(4C) Then, I notice in Vs 16, the example that Paul was to be in the plan of God. He says, "and yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."

Paul uses this idea again when he tells Timothy to be an example of the believer. The Bible teaches that everyone of us who are believers are to be examples of the life of Jesus Christ. The word "example" means "representative". We are God's representative here on earth. And all self-effort, all self-righteousness will hinder our example. But, by means of the Holy Spirit, God will produce his life in us. And God expects everyone of us to be an example of His life.

Dear friends, that takes surrender and commitment to God who is able to do it. The work of God will be manifested in our life according to our willingness to commit our lives unto Him. We are called to be an example. So, is your life an example of Christ? Will people know you are a Christian by the way you live and talk and act? "Be an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."

(5C) Then finally, notice the Praise Paul give to the Lord in Vs 17: NOW TO THE KING ETERNAL. You see, he is talking about Jesus. "Now, to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

Dear friends, Jesus is our example. He lives and guides the believer. He is the only God. And to Him belongs HONOR AND GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER.

*"SMILE AND LIVE IN PRAISE"*