

“False Teachers Illustrated – Part 1”
1 Timothy 6:3-5
(Preached at Trinity, October 3, 2021)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been stressing to Timothy the importance of preaching and teaching sound doctrine. **4:6, 4:11, 4:13, 4:16, 5:7, 6:2**
2. There is nothing more detrimental to the health of a church than false doctrine.
 - A. It will damn the souls of the lost leading them to a false comfort. Believing all is well with their soul they will find themselves without hope on the Day of Judgment.
 - B. It will also stunt the growth of Christians. It will spread like a cancer eating away at their souls.
 - C. Most serious, false doctrine presents a false view of God. Rather than declaring God in all His glory, it presents a false god according to the imagination of corrupt men and the deceits of Satan. Rather than living before God in holy reverence He is pushed to the rear.
Such false doctrine will destroy a church.
3. In this passage Paul returns to the subject of false teachers for the third time. This was a serious danger at the Church of Ephesus. These false teachers were the reason Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus.
1 Timothy 1:3 NAU - "As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,"
4. This was very personal for Paul. When he wrote of “certain men” teaching strange doctrines in **Chapter 1** he most likely knew who they were. They had names. Now he calls attention to them again: “If anyone advocates a different doctrine. . .”
These men had to be confronted and dealt with firmly and without hesitation.
5. In **Verse 3** Paul says these false teachers were guilty of teaching a “different doctrine.” It is the same word translated “strange doctrine” in **Chapter 1**
I pointed out it comes from a compound word - ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω from two Greek words:
ἕτερος, α, ου other, another, different. We use the word as a prefix to describe a contrasting difference – heterosexual – two people of a different sex – male and female.
διδασκαλία, ας - what is taught, teaching, doctrine.
Paul is talking about heterodoxy – a different doctrine.
6. In these verses Paul describes the nature of false doctrine and the character of those who teach it.
Verse 3 sets up a conditional sentence – a typical “if ...then” statement.
He is saying “if anyone teaches a different doctrine” then . . . **Verses 4-5**
7. This morning I want us to look at the nature of false teachers and their false teaching.

I. The work of false teachers – **Verse 3**

- A. They teach another doctrine – a different doctrine that weakens the church.
1. It is heterodoxy. It is a doctrine contrary to sound doctrine.
 2. All false doctrine shares the same error. It doesn't agree with the sound words of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of Christ is the foundation upon which our faith is built.
Romans 10:17 NAU - "So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
 3. All true Christian teaching has Christ at its center. It is Christocentric or Christ centered. Any teaching that doesn't point to Him is false.
2 John 1:7 NAU - "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist."
 4. These false teachers were pushing a hyper-asceticism and mysticism, supposing that self-denial and human works are at the heart of the Gospel. Such teaching diminishes Christ and fails to lead to true righteousness. Kent Hughes says it well: "*Sound doctrine* focuses on Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's promises through his atoning death, resurrection, and ascension. It lifts up Jesus as the perfect second Adam. It lifts him up as the son of Abraham par excellence. It lifts him up as the true Israel. It lifts him up as the ultimate son of David. It lifts him up as the Lamb of God. It lifts him up as Redeemer and Savior. It lifts him up as the true Temple. It lifts him up as the Alpha and Omega. It glories in him as our only hope in life and death!"¹
 5. The word for "sound" can refer to good health.
 - a. Sound doctrine leads to spiritual wellness – it edifies and builds up. It is the means of sanctification.
 - b. False doctrine causes spiritual weakness and decline.
 - c. The Christian must be built upon a solid foundation built upon Christ and His Word. A Biblical church must be built upon the Word of God. Jesus described it well:
Matthew 7:24-27 NAU - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell-- and great was its fall."

¹ R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 146.

6. Every true teacher knows the Word of God is the foundation of all truth. It is the standard upon which the church is built. And the Bible is the source of Christian growth.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Acts 20:32 NAU - "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

1 Peter 2:2 NAU - "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,"
 7. It is our only defense against the attacks of the enemy. Paul calls our sword the "Word of God"
- B. The false teacher doesn't teach doctrine according to godliness
1. False teaching is destructive. It destroys and tears down. Churches are weakened and God's standard of holiness is cast aside.
 2. Paul is saying that true doctrine promotes godliness.
 3. False teaching leads men away from Christ, the source of life.
 4. True doctrine produces godliness.
- II. The attitude of the false teachers – **V.4** – "He is conceited"
- A. The false teacher is most concerned about his image before men
1. He is proud, arrogant. His ultimate motivation for his teaching is increasing his own influence. He loves to argue and loves the thrill of winning the debate.
 2. The worst thing about the fall is it left us ego-centric—self-centered. We are most concerned about self – our happiness, our image – a life of conceit, self-display.
 3. The false teacher will do whatever necessary to maintain his influence. Rather than seeking to draw men to Christ he seeks to draw them to himself, using whatever means necessary. Most often by telling them what they want to hear. Paul called them ear ticklers—man pleasers.

2 Timothy 4:3 NAU - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires"
- B. Christianity demands meekness and humility – a dying to self
- 1 Peter 5:5 NAU** - "all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
1. Our teaching must always be with humility.

1 Peter 3:15 NAU - "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;"

2. Every true teacher knows how dependent he is upon the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of Truth.
John 16:13 NAU - "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth . . ."
 Martin Lloyd-Jones – “*The Holy Spirit* takes His own Word, He illumines it, and takes our minds and enlightens them, and we are thus made receptive to the Word.
 It is also the Holy Spirit alone who can give us true spiritual understanding of the Scriptures, an understanding of the doctrine.”²
3. The true teacher spends much time humbly before God in prayer for he knows how he always in danger of handling the Word wrongly.
4. The false teacher loves to argue. Our teaching must never be for the sake of winning the argument. It must never be to prove ourselves superior in knowledge. Rather it must be at the awe of our God and His Word.
 William Barclay wrote of failing to maintain this awe, “Instead of putting off our shoes from our feet because the place whereon we stand is holy ground, we are taking nice photographs of the Burning Bush from suitable angles: we are chatting about theories of the Atonement with our feet on the mantelpiece, instead of kneeling down before the wounds of Christ.”³

III. The aptitude of the false teachers

1 Timothy 6:4 NAU - "he is conceited *and understands nothing*; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words"

- A. Paul describes their ignorance – “he understands nothing”
 1. It is the nature of fallen humanity
Romans 1:21-22 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,"
 2. Instead of focusing on the truth they spend their time arguing over “controversial questions and disputes about words”
 - a. This is not a condemnation of defending the Words of Scripture. We believe in the plenary-verbal mode of inspiration – this means the words. These words are important and we must teach and defend them.
Matthew 4:4 NAU – “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word** that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”
 - b. Paul is condemning the false teachers for using their own words instead of “the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ” – **V. 3**
 In their arrogance they set their own teaching ahead of the Word of God. They twist the words of Scripture.

² D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authority*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997) Pages 63, 78.

³ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1960) Page 147.

- c. When people gather for worship they need to hear a word from God, not the opinions of man.
Our preaching must be bathed in Scripture – Sola Scriptura. It must be the heart of a pastor’s ministry.
3. Paul says these false teachers in their pride and arrogance speak of things which they neither know nor understand.
1 Timothy 1:6-7 NAU - "For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, ⁷ wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."
- B. What is the source of their blindness?
1. The external cause is satanic deception – See chapter 4:1 – “doctrines of demons”
1 Timothy 4:1 NAU - "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,"
- a. Satan is the father of lies, the master of deception.
b. He makes evil seem good and lies seem like the truth
2. The internal cause is their own depravity
1 Timothy 6:5 - "men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth"
- a. The lost man is naturally hostile towards God and His Word
b. He is completely unable to function in the spiritual realm
1 Corinthians 2:14 NAU - "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."
Ephesians 4:18 NAU - "being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;"
- C. Christian teaching, like salvation requires revelation and illumination—having our minds opened to receive the truth.
The lost man is void of the truth
2 Timothy 3:7-8 NAU - "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith."

Conclusion:

1. Paul says these men teaching a different doctrine could not be ignored. They were arrogant and void of understanding, although they believed they were teaching the truth. They needed to be dealt with swiftly and directly. The consequences of their false teaching upon the church would be devastating.
2. Next week we’ll look more particularly at the consequences of allowing these false teachers and their doctrines to go unchecked.
3. We must never let our guard down. We must maintain hearts fixed upon Christ, prepared to receive His Word, and always ready to confront that which doesn’t conform to the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ.