

“The Danger of False Doctrine – Part 2”  
2 Timothy 2:14-19  
(Preached at Trinity, June 12, 2022)

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. In **Verses 14-19** Paul is directing Timothy’s attention to the great danger of allowing false doctrine to continue in the church.
2. As we saw last week, false doctrine is an assault upon the person of God and is consistent with the nature and character of Satan.  
Jesus said of Satan,  
**John 8:44 NAU** - "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
3. Satan has consistently declared war upon God’s truth from the beginning. His messengers can be very convincing  
**2 Corinthians 11:13-14 NAU** - "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."
4. The first thing Paul does in this passage is to command Timothy to remind the leaders of the church to hold fast to the truth.  
**2 Timothy 2:14 NAU** - "Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless *and leads to* the ruin of the hearers."  
Presumably this is referring to the “faithful men” in **Verse 2**.
5. There are several points we must glean from this passage:
  - A. Truth is essential – Paul says, "Remind *them* of these things"  
False doctrine must not be tolerated. In an age of tolerance where every practice and every belief is accepted, Christians must continue to be intolerant of every belief or practice that is unbiblical. We must have a low-tolerance for error.
  - B. We must never argue on the basis of human wisdom alone. We must presuppose that the Bible is our only source of truth.
  - C. All false doctrine will have a detrimental effect upon the church and upon the souls of men which demands continual vigilance from the church.
6. This week we will look at these dangerous aspects of false doctrine. In **Verses 14-19** Paul gives six reasons why false doctrine must be avoided in the church.

I. **Verse 14** – It will lead to the ruin of the hearers

A. It puts obstacles in the path of unbelievers

1. False doctrine can present an obstacle by stifling the conviction of sin. Easy believism causes the sinner to assume salvation before the Spirit has done the work of conversion. It's one of Satan's most wretched schemes telling the sinner, "Don't worry about it. You're OK. You're a good person. Keep doing the best you can."
2. False doctrine can present an obstacle by giving them a false view of Christ.

**Acts 4:12 NAU** - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

The name of Christ is the fulness of His being – to pervert the reality of His person is to deny His name. Acts 4:12 tells us there is only one Savior and we must not pervert who He is.

3. It can lead to their "ruin" - καταστροφή - We get our word catastrophe. The only other place the word is used in the NT is in 2 Peter -

**2 Peter 2:6 NAU** - "and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter;"

B. It also causes harm to believers by causing confusion, doubt, discouragement, and disobedience

1. Instead of building up, it tears down
2. **Ephesians 4:14-15 NAU** - "we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,"

II. **Verse 15** – It brings shame on the teacher

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God"

A. The Christian, particularly the Christian teacher, must make it a matter of great importance to stand before God without the defilement of false doctrine lest he bring upon himself great shame. It should be the desire of each of us to hear the glorious words,

"Well done thou good and faithful servant"

1. This demands diligence in study
2. It demands a love for truth – because God is Truth
3. It demands an absolute commitment to the Word of God, our only source of objective truth.

B. A false teacher will be ashamed

**1 John 2:28 NAU** - "Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

1. Many of these false teachers are sincere in their beliefs – but they are sincerely wrong. They will stand before Christ ashamed.
2. Anyone who misinterprets, misrepresents, or detracts from the Word of God has reason to be ashamed

3. Most false teachers, however, are shameless in their abuse of the Word
  - a. They claim to be followers of Christ, but Paul refers to them as enemies of Christ  
**Philippians 3:18-19 NAU** - "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, <sup>19</sup> whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things."
  - b. Many, like the Pharisees, consider themselves to be godly. The passage implies that Hymenaeus and Phyletus professed to be Christians.

**2 Timothy 2:19 NAU** - "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

- C. Teachers are held to a strict standard and will be judged strictly  
**James 3:1 NAU** - "Let not many of *you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment."  
 We must "accurately handle the word of truth."  
 – lit. "to cut straight, to hold a straight course"  
 This demands caution every step of the way.

### III. Verse 16 – "it will lead to further ungodliness"

- A. Using human wisdom, the false teacher often justifies every belief and every action.
  1. His words are often well received because they are pleasing, desirable  
**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,"
  2. Isaiah warned of those who did not receive sound words:  
**Isaiah 30:9-10 NAU** - "For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen To the instruction of the LORD; <sup>10</sup> Who say to the seers, "You must not see *visions*"; And to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right, Speak to us pleasant words, Prophecy illusions."
- B. The godly man seeks to minimize his exposure to falsehood.
  1. This is true even for pastors. Just as a doctor is sometimes exposed to dangerous diseases, a pastor cannot help being exposed to falsehoods – but he must keep the exposure to a minimum.
  2. Paul commands us:  
**1 Thessalonians 5:22 NAU** - "abstain from every form of evil."  
**Philippians 4:8 NAU** - "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."
  3. Falsehood cannot protect from the wiles of the devil

IV. **Verse 17** – False doctrine will spread like a gangrene

“gangrene” - γάγγραινα – “a gangrene, a disease by which any part of the body suffering from inflammation becomes so corrupted that, unless a remedy be seasonably applied, the evil continually spreads, attacks other parts, and at last eats away the bones”

- A. Just like disease begins small but soon grows, error usually attacks in increments
  1. A church seldom becomes corrupt all at once – it is usually gradual. They become more and more corrupt until they cease to be a church  
See **Rev. 1:20 – 2:5**
  2. The same is true for individuals – corruption is a gradual thing.
    - a. When you sin you demonstrate that you have been deceived into believing that God has a different standard for you.
    - b. The standard of perfect holiness must never be lowered. To play with sin is to play with fire.
    - c. I’ve seen this happen in the lives of people – they lower the standard: attendance drops off, tithing becomes erratic, they cease living a disciplined life.
- B. Left untreated error will lead to greater sin.
  1. During the Civil War thousands of men lost arms and legs to gangrene. A common treatment for gunshot wounds was immediate amputation. Three out of four surgeries were amputations – about 60,000.  
Amputation is the radical response to gangrene.
  2. We must remove the source of corruption in our lives – nothing should be considered too precious.  
**Matthew 18:8 NAU** - "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire."
- C. The results of error may endure for years – Healing can be a slow process. This is why it is so difficult to reform a church. Long after the false teachers have been removed it is difficult work to cleanse the minds of the membership of the errors that they have embraced.
- D. This is why we must never allow error to become established in our own lives or in the life of our church
  1. Everything must be tested by the Word of God  
**1 John 4:1 NAU** - "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."  
**1 Thessalonians 5:20-22 NAU** - "do not despise prophetic utterances. <sup>21</sup> But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good."
  2. We must zealously maintain our separateness from this world and its philosophies  
**1 John 2:15 NAU** - "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."  
**James 4:4 NAU** - "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

- V. **Verse 18** – It will overthrow the faith of those who do not know the Gospel of Christ.  
 "and they upset the faith of some."
- A. Paul was never afraid to call out people by name
1. **2 Tim. 1:15** – Phygelus and Hermogenes
  2. **2 Tim. 2:17** – Hymenaeus and Philetus
  3. **2 Tim. 4:10** – Demus
  4. All of these were affected by the deception of this world  
 "for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and"
  5. Hymenaeus was mentioned in Paul's previous letter  
**1 Timothy 1:18-20 NAU** - "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, <sup>19</sup> keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. <sup>20</sup> Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme."
- Their heresy had something to do with the denying the resurrection
- B. This is an example of many doctrines that are essential to the faith.  
 Paul had already made reference to the resurrection in **Verse 8**
1. Paul considered it an acid test for faith.  
**Romans 10:9 NAU** - "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;"
  2. A person's attitude about the resurrection is a matter upon which his salvation rests.
  3. These false teacher were teaching a doctrine that was contrary to biblical Christianity
- C. This is the nature of false doctrine – it can lead people to a false understanding of the Gospel that can lead to the damnation of their souls.
1. The faith spoken of by Paul here is the temporary faith that follows a partial comprehension of the Gospel.
    - a. Remember, saving faith demands Knowledge, Assent, and Trust
    - b. If our knowledge is corrupted our faith will also be corrupted  
 False doctrine will only serve to lead men further away from Christ
  2. This is the nature of false doctrine and the methodology of Satan – He deceives more and more until the individual finally leaves religion altogether

**Conclusion:**

1. A final reason why false doctrine must be avoided in the church is that it characterizes those who do not know the Lord - **Verse 19**  
This is such a rich verse we will save it for next time.
2. We must fear even the smallest amount of false doctrine
  - a. It will lead to the ruin of the hearers - it damns the unbelievers and weakens believers.
  - b. It brings shame on the teacher – he will stand before God ashamed of the harm he brought upon the church
  - c. It will lead to further ungodliness – rather than leading unto holiness as with pure doctrine, it corrupts and perverts those who follow the damnable doctrines.
  - d. It will spread like gangrene that eats away at good tissue not satisfied until all is corrupted.
  - e. It will overthrow the faith of those who do not possess genuine faith - It presents a false gospel and creates a false faith.
3. False doctrine must not be tolerated. Christians must continue to be intolerant of every belief or practice that is unbiblical.
4. All false doctrine will have a detrimental effect upon the church and upon the souls of men. May God grant us a spirit of wisdom and understanding as we serve Him in love.