

Intro:

Sometimes I am very dissatisfied with the preaching around here!

I read an article a month or two ago about preaching in which the author made the point that the preacher shouldn't bring his studies into the pulpit.

The sermons I am most dissatisfied with as a preacher are those sermons where I seem to be somehow mechanically giving you the bare bones of my study: a series of word definitions, some points of grammar, showing how the parts of the passage connect together, and that is all.

The article on preaching gave this definition:

“After all, preaching is the proclamation of God’s truth about Christ to His people so that they may understand not merely what passages mean, but from these passages what He ... has done for them, and requires of them in such a way that by grace they do (or believe) what He commands.”¹

I think that several of my messages in 1 Timothy have been something along the lines of bare-bones Bible study and not really about preaching.

So this message is a bit of a ‘do-over’.

I want to take the whole passage we have been working through and put it all together, but hopefully it will come to mean something much more to you than it has meant so far.

We are discussing Paul’s first instructions to Timothy in these messages. The first thing on his heart to Timothy was the last thing on his heart to these same Ephesian elders when he had given them a farewell address six or seven years prior to this epistle.

Ac 20.28-31 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.²⁹ For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.³⁰ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.³¹ Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

This warning came to the men who were elders — leaders — in the Ephesian church (or churches)

¹ Jay Adams, “Studies or Sermons”, *Institute for Nouthetic Studies Blog*, 9/21/09, <http://www.nouthetic.org/blog/?p=2591#more-2591> (Accessed 10.24.09)

Now we come to 1 Timothy, and the warning is much the same:

Read 1 Tim 1.1-7

One thing that has dissatisfied me in dealing with this passage is the stress I have given to Timothy's pastoral responsibility.

It is true that Paul put a great responsibility on Timothy *and* on the elders in Ephesus (Ac 20), but I want to put the burden of that responsibility on the shoulders of the whole church as well.

Proposition: The first responsibility of the pastor / leaders / people of the church is correcting errant teaching.

I. Correcting errant teaching

A. A theme in 1 Timothy

1. Note phrase at end of 1.10 "any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine"
2. Note 1.18-20
3. Note 4.1-3
4. Note 4.6-7, 11-12
5. Note 6.3-5, 20-21

B. An 'up-front' problem (as we have seen)

1. The reason for Timothy's presence in Ephesus (1.3)
2. The reason for the 'charge' or 'commandment' (1.3, 5)

II. Nature of errant teaching

A. The terms of our passage

1. 'Other-teaching' (3)
2. Speculative teaching (4)
 - a. Fables ('myths') and genealogies
 - b. Which produce questions
3. Errant teaching (6-7)
 - a. Turned aside to 'fruitless discussion' ['idle talk']
 - b. Not understanding
 - 1) What they say

2) What they believe

There are some hints that these errors are connected with Jewish errors – myths and genealogies as one example – ‘law-teachers’ as another example, then ‘right use of the Law’ in vv. 8-11.

B. A contrast with other epistles

1. The Galatian error

- a. Called ‘another gospel’ (Gal 1.6-7)
- b. Vigorously opposed (Gal 1.8-9, 5.12, 6.15-17)

2. The Corinthian error

- a. The error of false apostles (2 Cor 11.13-15)
- b. Vigorously opposed (2 Cor 11.1-6, 7-11, 16-22, etc.)

C. Thus, errors *not* heresy

1. Instructions to Timothy

- a. Command not to teach (1.3)
- b. Command ... neither to give heed

2. Character of error instead of heresy

The church has always been plagued with heretical teachers – much of church history tells the tale of challenge after challenge to the orthodox doctrine of the faith.

But we must not forget there have always been challenges from the ‘simple folk’, from a ‘love of talking’ rather than a love of the truth – gossip not gospel.

ILLUSTRATION: My dad told me of a lady – an elderly lady – in our church growing up who used to love to ask provocative questions in a Bible study and then sit back and watch the fur fly. He learned not to rise to the bait.

The church of our day seems more side-tracked than ever over empty ideas, foolish talking, misuse of the Bible, justification of worldliness in all kinds of ways.

Timothy is under orders to ‘Stop It!’

III. Ambitions of errant teaching

A. The good of the one – ‘desiring to be law-teachers’ (6)

1. We talked about this term last week: a Jewish term for a learned Rabbi like Gamaliel
2. Not clear that these people were actually Jewish
3. Quite clear that they were using the Law incorrectly (see 8-11)
4. The problems with them were
 - a. Ignorance (misunderstood what they were saying and believing)
 - b. Idle talk – misuse of the Holy Scriptures
 - c. “I” trouble – desiring to be ‘teachers of the law’; *i.e.*, desiring a reputation

This is ‘the good of the one’ – much of the difficulty in a local church stems from individuals wanting to be masters, to be well thought of as spiritual people.

B. Rather than the good of the all ‘end of the commandment is love’ (5)

1. The end of Timothy implementing this commandment and stopping the errors is: love
2. The end of the disciple accepting the commandment and submitting heart and will to it is: love
3. The end of the disciplinary work of the local church among its people is: love

The church is about the good of the all, not the good of the one.

Conclusion:

Who is responsible for these things?

- The pastor: consider the command to Timothy
- The elders: consider the warning to the Ephesian elders
- The corrected: consider the change intended for Timothy’s disciples (see 1 Tim 4.6)

The men of the church (and their wives) in their faithful families are responsible for maintaining sound teaching and pursuing the end of the commandment.

- Know the truth – be able to identify error (don't need to know the theological terms, but be able to 'smell' the deviation)
- Lead your families
 - Teaching
 - Admonishing
 - Keeping separate from the world
 - Explaining your beliefs, standards and convictions on a Biblical basis.

This is the responsibility of all in the church – the pastor is to train you, you are to apply the training, all are to develop into the mature Christian love that God intends to mark the local church.