

What's A Pastor To Do?

1 Timothy 1:3-11

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In Acts 20, when we were going through that on Wednesday night, we saw Paul meet with the elders in Ephesus, one of my favorite scenes in the Bible because it's a group of pastors meeting on the beach. I love that. I like the beach, and I like to meet with pastors. I said that they maybe had a board meeting—they brought their surfboards to this prayer meeting. As Paul was meeting with them, one thing he said to these pastors there in Ephesus (and I introduce it this way because actually Timothy is in Ephesus pastoring), he said "...after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Exactly what Paul had predicted there in Acts 20, with these elders or pastors in Ephesus, has happened.

Tonight in our text Paul is actually talking to Timothy about the dangers of false teachers. The false teaching that they were promulgating lie in two basic areas: one was legalism, and the other was in the way they interpreted, applied, and preached the law rather than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those people aren't dead. They're still alive in the church today. We have legalists and those that are into the law who twist the Scriptures for their own purpose and gain. Paul is going to give Timothy four directives, I'll give them to you as we go along, but we only covered two verses last week so we can back up to verse 1 to get a running start on verse 3. It starts with Paul, who is the human author. We know all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, so Paul was the instrument the Holy Spirit used to pen this letter. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; 2 Unto Timothy, my own son," the word "own" means genuine or authentic. It was used for a biological child rather than an adopted child, "in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."

Real quickly, I want to bring something up I missed last week. You say, "You went 55 minutes and you missed something in two verses?" Yeah. I missed something, and I couldn't sleep last week when I went home, it bothered me so much; that is, at the end of verse 2, just a little footnote there, the fact that "Grace, mercy and peace," come "from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord," or Christ Jesus our Lord, puts God the Father and Jesus Christ the Lord on equal footing. This is a clear affirmation of the deity of Jesus Christ. I like to point that out whenever I run across that because a lot of times people attack the doctrine of the deity of Christ, and maybe you kind of flounder sometime and don't know where in the Bible you can prove it. This is not one of the strongest, by any stretch of the imagination, but it does actually implement or indicate that Jesus is on an equal footing with God the Father and speaks of His deity, that Jesus is God.

Verses 1-2 were the opening greeting. Now, the first two chapters of 1 Timothy are kind of personal. They're introductory, and it's just kind of warming us up to what he really wants to get

into in chapter 3, but there's some important things that he says from verses 3-11. I want to actually read the whole text, and then we're going to come back and unpack it. Beginning in verse 3, Paul says, "As I besought thee," or I commanded or charged thee, "to abide still at Ephesus," that's where Timothy was pastoring, "when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. 5 Now the end of the commandment is charity," love, "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," or that's a genuine, authentic, pure faith, "From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling," or empty words, "Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm," he's describing these false teachers who wanted to teach the law.

Verse 8, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine," one of the themes of this book, sound doctrine, "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."

Again, as I said, it's kind of introductory. Paul's warming up to Timothy, and it starts first of all in verse 3, the first part, with telling Timothy to stay on the job. If you're taking notes, that's the first directive he gives to this young pastor. First, don't quit. Don't give up. Persevere. Don't retire. Don't give up. Don't leave. Don't go anywhere. Stay on the job. Go back to verse 3 and look at it with me. He says, "As I besought thee," that word "besought" carries with it one of the common words found in this epistle, the idea of, "I charge you," or "I adjure thee," or "I exhort you." It's really a strong word. He's actually not just recommending or suggesting for Timothy, he's actually charging him to stay still in Ephesus. "...when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

The first point I want to make is that you stay there. Why did Paul have to tell Timothy to do that? First, because Ephesus was a very wicked city. It was a very difficult place. Secondly, Pastoring is not an easy thing. It's very difficult. I've often said it is one of the most dangerous professions in the world because you have so many things that want to come against and attack you—the spiritual, demonic warfare is so great. We've seen so many pastors that have become casualties that have fallen by the wayside. Either morally or doctrinally, they have made shipwreck of their faith and caused others to stumble. I was reading Swindoll's commentary on this passage today. He was saying that if the average church member knew how often a pastor got discouraged and wanted to resign, they would be shocked. The great, Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said, "I am subject to such great fits of depression," to his congregation of 6,000 people in London. He says, "I pray to God that you never have to go to these places that I have to go."

Timothy was naturally shy. He was timid. The Bible encourages Timothy that, "God hath not

given us the spirit of fear,” that word “fear” in the Greek is a word that we get our word timidity from. Evidently, Timothy was timid. I call him timid Timothy. He was fearful, and it seems as though he actually had some physical problems, too. It was to Timothy that Paul said, “...use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” I’ve never met a wino that didn’t know how to quote that verse for me. That’s their favorite text. Of course, it was for medical purposes that Timothy was to use that wine for his often infirmities and for his stomach’s sake. Then, he had to tell Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers.” He’s actually telling him, “I left you in Ephesus. I know it’s a pagan city. I know it’s a very wicked city,” they worshipped the god Artemis or Diana as we know it, and many people came there with all kinds of wicked, sinful, licentious practices; but Paul says, “Look, don’t quit. Don’t stop. Don’t give up.”

One of the things that keeps a pastor going—keeps you going, keeps me going—is that we know that God has a purpose and a plan for us. He has called us, and it’s not the need in front of us, it’s the call behind us; so don’t get discouraged if you don’t see the fruit, if you don’t see the results, and sometimes this is why pastors get discouraged because they pray, they labor, they preach, and they don’t always see visible results. They don’t see visible fruit. God has got that in His control. We need to just be faithful to what God has called us to do and leave the results with God. What is it God has called you to do? Do it. Do it faithfully, and leave the fruit, leave the results, in God’s hands. Don’t judge your ministry by other people or by other standards, by man’s standards or by man’s approval, all you’re looking for is one day to hear God say to you, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of the lord.”

I have a very, very special place in my heart for pastors because I know their struggles. I know their battles. I know the discouragement. I know the hardships, especially pastors of small congregations. I have some dear friends that have been in the ministry for years. I was talking with a friend this week that’s been a pastor for many years. He was all excited because they have now about 100 people coming on Sunday morning. He’s been pastoring for 40 years, and he was all excited because Wednesday night they had 20 people and Sunday they had 100 people there. I know how hard it is to keep going and not want to give up or throw in the towel. One of my favorite authors is a man by the name of V. Raymond Edman. He actually made that famous quote, “It’s always too soon to quit.” If satan can’t get you to go into sin, if he can’t get you to go into doctrinal error, he’ll just get you to quit, just to give up because you’re discouraged and you don’t see the fruit that you want to see.

I don’t know what all was going on in Ephesus other than from the context Timothy was facing a very large challenge. He was young, he was filling some big shoes or sandals in this case, that of the Apostle Paul, and he was dealing with all the problems of the false teachers that had invaded the church at Ephesus. So, Paul says, “Stay on the job. Stay there.” “...abide still at Ephesus.” No doubt, he wanted to give it to someone else and to run to be with and continue traveling with Paul. The second directive that Paul gave Timothy, and gives to us, too...and if you’re discouraged in your ministry tonight, I am basically saying to you, “Don’t give up. In due season you’ll reap if you faint not. Don’t get discouraged. Don’t stop praying for people. Don’t stop sharing with people. Don’t stop witnessing. Don’t stop serving the Lord.”

The second directive is that Timothy is to teach the truth. Notice that at the end of verses 3 and 4. Paul said, "...when I went into Macedonia," by the way, Ephesus is on the east side of the Mediterranean in what is modern Turkey today. In Bible days, it was known as Asia Minor. We studied maps in the book of Acts, and Macedonia is across the western side of the Mediterranean Sea. It's Greece. Macedonia is northern Greece. Achaia is southern Greece. In Macedonia would be Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, those churches that Paul had established. By the way, the setting here for verse 3 is that Paul was under house arrest in the end of the book of Acts. He was released. When he was released, he went with Timothy and Titus to the island of Crete. From the island of Crete, he sailed up to Asia and went into Miletus and there he left Timothy in Ephesus. He actually left Titus on the island of Crete and Timothy in the city of Ephesus.

Verse 3, "...when I went into Macedonia," and I want you to do this, "that thou mightest charge," again, that's a military word, that solemn charge that must be obeyed, "some that they teach no other doctrine." The second thing you're to do is, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister," or generate, "questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith." Again, as you read this in the King James translation, (I was pretty closely tempted to use the New Living Translation because the verbiage is a little harder to understand; and if you get a chance, get a different translation and look at it.) there's two things he's telling him here, "First, I want you to charge some that are there (not all of them), that they teach no other doctrine." The Didache there, it's the verbal teaching and the faith that we hold and believe.

Now, what I want to say there is that not all paths lead to God. It's very clear that there are such a thing as false teachers. You say, "Pastor, do you really need to say that?" Yeah. In our post-modern era, which we're seeing in politics right now, by the way, in America, there is no absolute right or wrong. There's no truth. It's all relative. Post-modernism, which has permeated everything in our culture today, is the idea that there really isn't any absolute truth. It's pragmatic—whatever works, whatever gets what you want, whatever you want to do you do it. There's no ultimate truth, I mean, we're all here by accident. There's no God. There's no fixed point, so nothing's certain. We can't even know anything for sure. This is why politicians can lie and steal and cheat and do things, and the world's mentality is that there is nothing really intrinsically wrong; but we know that's not true. As Christians, we have God, we have His Word, we have His law, we're going to look at tonight, which is truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," so we have a fixed point to know right from wrong in this culture that we live in today, which is obvious because he said there are some that are teaching other doctrine.

This is one of the challenges of the pastoral ministry—dealing with false doctrine, dealing with false teachers. This, by the way, is not en vogue or popular in the church today. What's en vogue and popular in the church today is that everything be positive, everything be happy, everything be good. You don't expose false doctrine. You don't expose false teachers. You certainly don't name names, you just don't go there. You just kind of smile and give happy thoughts and tell everybody how wonderful everything is and you don't deal with that. Even Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you," how? "in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravaging wolves." It's, "Grandma, what big teeth you have!" They look like a

sheep and talk like a sheep and, “Baaaa,” they baaaaa like a sheep. They may SNIFF SNIFF! maybe even smell like a sheep. They have the same vocabulary but a different dictionary. Don’t you forget that. “Oh yeah, we love Jesus. Oh yeah, we’re Christians. Oh yeah, we believe you’re saved by grace through faith.” They throw out all this Christianese, but they define the terms differently. There are false teachers out there. Not every pastor that stands in a pulpit is teaching the truth of God’s Word. Certainly, not every pastor that’s on television or radio or writing books, it’s not all gospel truth. You need to be careful. There are wolves that come in sheep’s clothing. So, Pastor Timothy, I know you’re young, I know you’re timid, I know it’s difficult, but there are some in the church at Ephesus that are teaching other doctrines, and you need to be careful and watch out for them.

In Jude, verses 3-4, it says, “...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once,” and for all, “delivered unto the saints.” That passage is not the faith delivered but once and for all, so there’s no new revelation. There’s no new truth. You’ve heard me say it a thousand times: If it’s new, it’s not true; and if it’s true, it’s not new. Now you’ve heard me say it 1,001 times. If I’m not teaching the same truths that were handed down by Paul to Timothy, found in the apostolic Word of God, then I’m not teaching the gospel, I’m not preaching the truth. There’s nothing new. “Oh, this is deep, and I’ve never heard that before.” “Oh, this is really insightful,” you know, God can share new light on old truths, but there’s nothing really new under the sun. There were those that were false teachers, and Timothy was given the charge of making sure that they taught no other doctrine. Any pastor worth his salt will confront false teaching. If we find it in the church, we confront it. If we find it in the fellowship, we confront it. If it’s something that needs to be spoken about and dealt with, we deal with that—speaking the truth in love. Now, love without truth is hypocrisy; and truth without love is brutality. We need to speak both the truth and do it in love that we may grow up.

There is only one way. There is false doctrine, and we want to know the truth. What is the truth? The truth is the Word of God. Anything outside of that we can’t really vouch for it being true. Any man’s philosophy, any man’s ideas, it’s just that. It’s not the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. You need to know your Bibles. You need to know what you believe, and why you believe it.

Notice that they were also giving heed to fables. They’re teaching other doctrine. An indication of what these false teachers were into...now, you can read all the scholarly commentaries you want on this passage. No one really knows for sure what these false teachers were into, but there’s some indication by the text they were into fables. The word “fables” we get our word myths from. They weren’t preaching the true, clear, simple gospel truths. They were getting into myths and kind of far-fetched, crazy ideas.

There was a philosopher known as Philo during the intertestamental period. He took the Old Testament and began to do what we call “allegorize” it. He took what I believe was supposed to be historical passages, for example, the book of Genesis, chapters 1-11, and all the way through but especially the first eleven chapters...this is under attack today, by the way, because it’s the foundation for the gospel which we preach. They teach that there really wasn’t an Adam

and Eve. There really wasn't a Garden of Eden. God didn't really create the heavens and the earth by the word of His power. They teach evolution. They deny the historicity and the individuals of the book of Genesis—if there isn't an Adam and Eve, then they didn't fall into sin; and if there's no original sin, then there is no need of a Savior. It actually comes right back to Jesus Christ, and Jesus was mistaken because He mentioned Adam and Eve and their sin and their fall. It just tears the foundation out of what we believe as Christians.

They like to allegorize it. They like to make it myth, allegory, or spiritualize it; and it's not to be taken literal. They diminish the Word of God when we know from several sources that the Bible is to be believed and accepted as historically accurate. Archeology has proven over and over and over again the reliability of the historical narrative in the Bible. They were given to myths or fables, and I weary myself today of people that are attracted to fanciful, far-out, crazy, bizarre interpretations of the Bible. They are enamored by, drawn to, and interested in that. I don't understand that. I don't have the time for that. Notice the problem with that. They get into "...endless genealogies." Again, we're uncertain as to how they used these genealogies, but it would seem as if these false teachers had a Jewish kind of Old Testament emphasis, but they also had a kind of a new-age mystic kind of emphasis. Some feel that it might have even been the beginning stages of what we know as Gnosticism. Today we know it's called Kabbala. It's the combining of Judaism with mysticism in one kind of ball of wax. They got into genealogies, and they would trace their genealogies back. It's interesting that the Church of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saints, the so-called Mormons, are really big on their genealogies and the genealogical records. They probably took these genealogies in the Old Testament, they allegorize and spiritualize them, and put meaning into them that God never intended there to be meaning in.

They get into these fables and myths, these endless genealogies, notice the result, "...which minister questions, rather than godly edifying," which I would translate godly living, "which is in faith: so do." Let me put it in simple layman's terms. Basically, they get into all these crazy, fanciful, cute, kooky ideas. Remember when Bible codes came on the scene? Everyone was trying to find hidden codes in the Bible and all of this stuff. Now, there is such a thing as biblical numerology, but you need to be careful that you don't think that God set some hidden code in the Bible and you have to have some kind of a special key to unlock it. Do you know the Bible says that we all have the Holy Spirit, and we don't need anyone to really teach us. Now, God gives some people a gift of teaching, but they are not the teacher. Do you know Who the teacher is? The Holy Spirit. You can pray and you can read your Bible and God's Spirit, that inspired the Scriptures, can give you what we call illumination, and then it can happen that you'll have transformation. The Bible is given by inspiration. We study the Bible and the Spirit gives us illumination, and the Holy Spirit produces a transformation of our lives. But they get sidetracked into all these kind of discussions and debates and fanciful things, and what Paul says there, it doesn't produce "godly edifying" or living. It doesn't change the way that you live. It doesn't make you a better husband or a better wife. It doesn't help you to resist sin. It doesn't make you more kind, gracious, and loving.

Many times I preached my heart out and taught the doctrines of Scriptures and I'll have

someone come up to me and ask me some crazy, insane, bizarre, non-consequential question. I'm thinking, Why do you even care about that? I try to be as patient as I can. I'm not trying to scare you tonight, either, and go, "Whoa, I was going to ask Pastor John a question after church. I don't want him to use me as an illustration," but it seems like, "Is there any normal people that ask me questions anymore?" You know, all these crazy, bizarre questions. I think, Where did you even get that? Why are you even worried about that? I'm trying to just get down what the Bible teaches very clearly without getting into these things that nobody knows if it's even in the Bible! Amen. Spend your time on the clear teaching of God's Word. If nobody else has ever seen it than you, then it's probably not in the Bible, okay? "I saw something no one else has ever seen." It's probably because it's not there! That's why. It doesn't generate godly living, verse 4, "which is in faith: so do." Live by faith. The goal is godly living.

First, stay on the job. Second, teach the truth. That's the pastor's job. Don't give up. Third, verses 5-7, keep your eyes on the goal. Don't lose your perspective of what you are trying to accomplish. Notice verse 5. "Now the end of the commandment," or the charge, "is charity," love. That's the goal. The goal of the pastor is to mature God's people so that they grow in love. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," and that you understand the hidden codes, right? No. He says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." I don't care if you know Greek and Hebrew and you're a theologian. If you don't have love, you don't have anything—you're sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. If you have not love, what good does it do? That's the goal, and that's my goal is that the Spirit of God works in the heart of the child of God to make them more like the Son of God and produce God's love in our hearts. If we at Revival Christian Fellowship aren't growing in love, then something is amiss.

Paul says, "Now the end of the commandment," charge, the goal, if you would, "is charity," love, "out of," three things, "a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," and I love that. It reminded me today about what we're trying to accomplish here in our church. What we're trying to accomplish in our church is not information from the Bible to your head or information from the pulpit to the pew, but life transformation—that as you know God's Word and the Spirit works in your life, that you love God and you learn to love other people. If you're coming to this church and you're sitting under the teaching and you're not growing in your love for your husband, for your wife, for other people, then something is amiss, something is wrong. The first thing is "charity," love, "out of a pure heart." Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," and that it come from "...a good conscience."

When you become a Christian, God gives you a clean conscience. It also issues from a "...faith unfeigned," or genuine, sincere, or not phony. It's not put on. It's genuine or authentic. It's not false. From these three things, a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, "From which some having swerved," in my King James Bible, which means they have turned aside. It's actually the phrase that would be used of missing the mark. They haven't hit the target, and "have turned aside," that is a medical term which was used for the dislocation of a limb, so they're out of joint, they're tweaked, or messed up. They "have turned aside unto vain jangling," again, in my King James Bible, which is empty words. Man, ain't that the truth!

I have to confess sometimes I've turned Christian television on. I turned it on the other night just to sit and kind of check it out and give it a chance. I listened to a whole sermon. I'll be very kind right now, I won't tell you who it was. Literally, I sat there and listened for half an hour and said, "He's not saying anything biblical or anything scriptural." What he's saying a non-Christian life coach could say and do say. It's kind of like a pep talk. It's like a high school pep rally. There's no content to it. I don't think it needs to be dry preaching, but it needs to have content. What's happening today is we've left substance for style. We've given up substance for style and, Lord willing, we should have both. There's nothing wrong with being eloquent when you preach the Word using the gifts that God gives you, but if there's no content, if there's no substance...but people don't listen for content or substance, and they don't listen for biblical accuracy. They just want to be moved and touched and excited and blessed by what they say. Even though afterwards they say, "Wasn't that awesome?" "Yeah. What did he say?" "Well, I don't know, but it was good."

One of the greatest compliments that I can get from people who listen to my teaching is years later say, "I heard you preach and this is what you said and I'll never forget that," and "you said this and you said that, and these points, and they stuck with me. I remembered it and it changed my life." That's happened to me. That's what really blesses me. I ran into somebody that heard me 20 years ago—one sermon, only one time ever heard me. He said, "I heard you 20 years ago at this conference and you spoke on that, and I'll never forget what you said from this text. It was Philippians 3 and you said this, and this verse," they just remembered everything and hung onto it. It's not just style, it has to have content. That's the problem with these false teachers of the law that they turned away to this "vain jangling," which is empty words.

Remember 2 Timothy 4, that in the last days, "...they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears," that's what they're doing. Verse 7, "Desiring to be teachers of the law," they were legalists teaching the law. There's nothing wrong with teaching the law. It depends upon what you teach from the law and how you use the law, and we'll see that in just a moment. They try to teach the law, "understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Each one of those means something different. What they say has to do with the content. In other words, they just mouth words, but it doesn't mean anything. It sounds really impressive. They use big fancy words so people are impressed, but they don't even know what they mean themselves. Then it says they affirm it. That word "affirm" is the emotional oratory. It means that they're excited and amped and zealous and pumped up, but there's no content to what they're saying. They're just mouthing empty content with their affirmation, their emotional oratory ability. I believe that this is the false teachers described.

In verses 8-11 we have our fourth directive. First, stay on the job. Second, teach the truth. Third, keep your eyes on the goal. Sound doctrine will lead to sound living. Don't forget that. Sound doctrine leads to sound living; bad doctrine leads to bad living. What we believe determines how we behave. Notice verse 8, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully," what does that mean? It means that they were using the law, but they were using it in

a wrong way, “the law is good.” Now, you sometimes find Christians that are anti-law. They’re down on the law. They’re all about the grace of God, and they’re anti-law. There’s a term for that. It’s called antinomianism, which means against the law. They’re really big on grace and think that because we’re under grace that we can do whatever we want. “Weeeee! I’m under grace. I can live however I want, and there’s no law that I have to obey.”

You need to understand the purpose of the law. The law was never given to bring salvation or to help sanctify the Christian. Don’t forget that. You cannot be saved by keeping the law—it wasn’t given for that purpose—and you cannot be holy or live a godly life by trying to keep the law or rules. We’re saved by grace through faith, but the law is actually in its purpose and design to show me my sin and my need of a Savior. It’s to show me that I can’t get to heaven on my own, that I’m a guilty sinner, I’m condemned, I’m under the wrath of God, and that it drives me to Christ for salvation. Paul described it in the book of Galatians as the law being our schoolmaster, that it actually drives us to Christ. So, we look at the law, we see our sin, and instead of rolling up our sleeves trying to work hard to be good enough to go to heaven, we fall on our knees and say, “God, be merciful to me a sinner,” or “Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to die for my sins, to pay for my sins, so that I could be forgiven.” The purpose of the law is to show us our sin. It’s also a revelation of the righteousness of God and the righteous nature of God.

Take the ten commandments, (by the way, we will do a series on Sunday morning through the ten commandments) when you read the ten commandments, no one can keep them and go to heaven; but they do reveal the very nature of God, the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, and the standards of God. As we’re going to learn Sunday morning in Romans 8, the Spirit of God has written God’s law on our hearts, and “...what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” You begin to obey God and keep His law, but it’s the work of the Spirit in sanctification. We can’t be saved by the law. We can’t be sanctified by the law, but the law is good and holy and righteous.

Paul then describes the purpose of the law, the use of the law, in verses 9-10. “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless,” why are there speed limit signs? It’s for people that go too fast, right? It’s not for people who go too slow, it’s for people who go too fast—for speeders! That’s not in the text, I just threw that in there. Wouldn’t it be funny if Paul put speeders there? He describes them. Notice these categories. He said, “but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane,” that means those who blaspheme religious things and the things of God. They oppose spiritual things. “...for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers,” why did he give murderers in those two categories? Because he is specifically talking about children who would kill their parents. He’s talking about children that would actually murder their own parents because notice at the end of verse 9, “for manslayers,” that’s homicide in general. He’s talking about rebellious children. By the way, many of the ten commandments are alluded to in these statements here. One of the commandments is (the sixth commandment) thou shalt not kill,

right? So, “for manslayers,” for murderers.

Notice verse 10, “For whoremongers,” in the King Jimmy, and you can read other translations. From the Greek word there we get our word pornography, which means sexual immorality. Some have translated that adulterers, “for them that defile themselves,” don’t miss this one, “with mankind,” you can do your own study, your own research, and look it up yourself. That’s talking about homosexuality. That’s talking about sodomy and homosexuality. Then, “for menstealers,” kidnappers, “for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to,” and here’s our word, “sound doctrine.” I love that!

Years ago, I discovered in these pastoral epistles that that word “sound” was a medical term. It actually means healthy or life-giving, sound doctrine. The word doctrine is teaching, and the word “sound” before it means it’s healthy, life-giving doctrine; so what we believe determines how we behave. It’s important. Remember this. A lot of people will join a church or get involved in a church or attend a church. We don’t have formal membership, but if you become a part of this church, you attend, you serve, you give here, you make it your home. We don’t have formal membership on paper, but a lot of people will get attached to a church, and you need to have a local church that you consider your home fellowship, but they don’t pay any attention to what the doctrine is. They just know the worship is great, the pastor is funny, the parking lot is really nice, they have a great playground for the kids, and the pews are comfortable—all the little stuff they have.

They don’t really stop and say, “What do they believe about the Bible? Do they believe the Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God that’s given by inspiration, that it’s without error? What do they believe about God and His nature? Do they believe the trinity, that there’s one God in three persons—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit—all equally divine but three separate Persons? What do they believe about Jesus? Did He co-exist with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit for all eternity? What do they believe about the virgin birth? What do they believe about the sinless life of Christ? What do they believe about the substitutionary atonement? What do they believe about the resurrection? What to they believe about the church, about satan, and angels and the Second Coming? By the way, you can go on our website and look at our doctrinal statement and get a very, very detailed doctrinal statement about what we believe or what we hold to here at Revival Christian Fellowship and the verses that are there in the Scriptures for you to look up. It’s a whole Bible study in and of itself, and I recommend that. When you get involved in a church, ask yourself, “What do they believe? Is it biblical or scriptural? Is it contrary to sound doctrine, healthy doctrine?”

In closing, we see the law and the gospel, verse 11, “According to,” so is it sound doctrine, which is in harmony with or according to? This is the standard. My last point was remember the standard, and here’s the standard, the gospel. The church is to be all about the gospel and not compromising the truth of the gospel and preaching the gospel. He closes with that in verse 11, “According to the glorious gospel,” an interesting way to describe it, or the gospel of glory, “of the blessed God,” it’s not a man-made message, it’s from God, “which was committed to my trust,” which conveys the idea that Paul says that the gospel was entrusted to me and that

I, as a minister, am a steward, and in a steward you are to be found faithful to faithfully, accurately preach the gospel—not add to it, not take away from it. It's not the gospel if you add works or you add legalism. It's not the gospel if you delete or take away from it. You need to know what the gospel is.

Here's the gospel, 1 Corinthians 15. Paul says, "...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures," that's the gospel in a simple nutshell, but it does involve His incarnation, His sinless life, His substitutionary death, His physical bodily resurrection, His ascension back to heaven, and His exaltation at the right hand of God the Father. He ever lives to save those that call on the name of the Lord.

Here's what breaks my heart, and this is something that has been interesting for me the last six years since I've been here to Revival and we've seen so many people come to Christ, is that the church many times is not preaching the gospel. It's not preaching the gospel. It's preaching kind of a message of self help, a feel good. As a matter of fact, the preacher that I was watching the other night said, "You should look in the mirror and tell yourself that you're beautiful, you're wonderful, you're gifted, you're talented, you're amazing, you're highly favored, you're wonderful, you're good, and get yourself all pumped up." I'm all for being positive. I'm all for seeing myself as God sees me, but Paul said, "I'm a sinner. I'm the chief sinner. I'm the biggest sinner in the bunch!" He wouldn't have been invited to preach at this man's church. We don't call Christians sinners.

Do you know one interesting thing about a church? It's like a hospital, but it's different than that. At the hospital of the church, we're all sick and we're trying to help each other. The hospital administrator is the pastor, and he's sick, too! I'm a sinner. We're all sinners. We're saved by grace. We have a new nature, so we all come to the hospital—we're all sick and we're trying to help each other. It's a challenge. That's why ministry in the church is such a challenge!

The problem is that we have left the gospel, the preaching of the gospel, but here in context, please don't miss this. (I'm trying to wrap this up and not be too long. I went almost an hour last Wednesday night. I thought for sure no one would show up tonight.) The problem is the gospel is good news, it's not good views. So often preachers are preaching views not news. It's the proclamation of the news that, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It's the news about Jesus, who was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life, gave Himself to die upon a cross so that He could forgive our sins, was buried and rose from the dead and went back to heaven and He's coming again. That's good news! Amen? The problem is that we've gotten away from that and we're preaching ideas, philosophies, psychology, self-help methods, all kinds of motivational things and we're not just proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is what Paul said in the book of Romans. He said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," or to the Gentile. If you happen to be here tonight, and you haven't trusted

Jesus Christ, you haven't been born again, you haven't been forgiven of your sins, you haven't received the gospel, the good news...by the way, you're not going to see your need for the good news until you first know the bad news that you're a sinner going to hell and the law has found you guilty. We're under condemnation. That's why the law is good. It's good to show you your sin. Jesus said, "That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery." If you have anger in your heart, you've committed murder. If you've ever lied or stolen or disrespected your parents, you're a sinner. We've all broken God's law, and so we all stand in need. The good news is God has made provision for our sins, and if you're here tonight and you don't know that if you died you'd go to heaven, you don't know that your sins are forgiven, why not? Why not trust Christ? Why not believe in Him? Why not trust Him? Why not receive Him?

If there's anyone here tonight that says, "Pastor John, I don't know that I've ever received Christ. I don't know if I've ever been born again." He died on the cross for you. He took your sin. He was buried and rose from the dead, but you must, by faith, trust Him to be saved. I'm going to ask every head bowed, every eye closed, and if you're here tonight and you haven't trusted Jesus Christ, I want to give you this opportunity right now.

If God has spoken to you through this message today, and you're not sure that you're a child of God. Maybe you don't know for sure that if you died today that you would go to heaven. You've never really trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. I would like to lead you in a prayer right now inviting Christ to come into your heart and to be your Savior. As I pray this prayer, I want you to repeat it out loud right where you are after me. Make it from your heart inviting Christ to come in and be your Lord and Savior. Let's pray.

Dear Lord Jesus, I'm sorry for my sin. I pray that You'll forgive me and come into my heart and make me Your child. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and help me to live for You all the days of my life. I believe in You. I receive You as my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you've prayed that prayer and you meant it, God heard that prayer and I believe that God will and does forgive your sins. We'd like to help you get started growing in your walk and relationship with Jesus Christ. God Bless you.