

Text

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship^[a] from God that is by faith. ⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers,^[b] liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound^[c] doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Main Point

The right use of God's Word seen by it's fruit

Introduction (300)

Hook

The damage of using God's Word wrongly is devastating.

It destroys families, destroys churches, shakes nations, undermines people's faith and worst of all keeps people on the path to hell.

God's word is good and life-giving if used rightly.

But if used wrongly it will lead to perversion, vanity and ultimately death.

Just like a hunting rifle can bring life-giving food to a family, it can also be used as a tool of murder in different hands. Is the gun bad because it was used wrongly? No, the use of it was wrong.

So it is with God's word and God's law. It must be used rightly if it is to be life-giving. And tragically this is not always the case.

How do we know if God's word is being used rightly? We know by the fruit produced.

Outline

Today we are going to turn our attention to this idea:

"The fruit of the correct use of God's Word"

This idea we are going to develop into three points, each looking at a different fruit or outcome of using God's word.

1. The Fruit of Doubt
2. The Fruit of Love
3. The Fruit of Restraint

Part 1 –The Fruit of Doubt (v3-4a, 6-7)

Exposition

Context

So let us begin with our first point: The Fruit of Doubt

As you know the book of 1 Timothy is a letter written by Paul to his trusted delegate and friend.

Timothy had been converted by Paul's preaching and had joined Paul on his second missionary journey.

Timothy was dear to Paul. Not only because of a close friendship, but also because Timothy exemplified "A true child in the faith".

Timothy was based in Ephesus (on the west coast of modern-day Turkey) where Paul had ministered for about three years.

Paul had left Ephesus to continue his work, and when he left, the church was well established with elders in place and the clear teaching of the Gospel.

But when he said farewell to the elders of the churches, he warned them. He warned them that false teachers would come from among them. False teachers who would exploit the flock and tear the church to shreds. Paul calls these men fierce wolves.

We read of this warning in Acts 20:28-30.

This is Paul talking to the Ephesian Elders:

*²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God,^[a] which he obtained with his own blood.^[b] ²⁹ **I know** that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among*

*you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from **among your own selves** will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

Sence of urgency

And sadly, but not surprisingly, that is exactly what happens. The predictions have come true. The false teachers have arisen. And they are spreading doubt and confusion.

And so we read Paul's opening lines, after his salutation, as he writes to Timothy. Looking at verse 3 and 4:

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship^[a] from God that is by faith.

Notice, first of all, the sense of urgency that Paul has. Paul cut's straight to the chase.

In most of his other letters, there is the salutation (which we see in verse 1-2), and then a paragraph or two of , or thanks giving or benediction towards the recipients. But not in this letter.

There are urgent matter to address and Paul goes straight to business.

You also get the sense of urgency with the language Paul uses.

He says: *As I **urged** you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus.*

The word “Urge” could be translated as “Beg” or “implore” or “beseech”. Paul wants to stress the importance of the work Timothy is to do. This is no secondary matter. This is urgent and important!

And what is Timothy to do? He is to **charge** *certain persons not to teach any different doctrine*.

Not suggest, not ask them to consider a different perspective. Not agree to disagree. No! He is to confront them and silence them.

He is to charge them stop teaching different doctrine.

He is to command them to silence.

This charge is by virtue of apostolic authority, delegated to Timothy.

He is to demand obedience. This is not the time to be beating around the bush. This is the time for direct confrontation. This is a hill to die on. This is a battle worth fighting.

These are urgent times.

Certain Persons

At this point, Paul is content not to name these false teachers. Timothy knows who they are. The church knows who they are. They know who they are.

He just refers to them as “Certain Persons” as you notice in verse 3 and in verse 6.

Paul focuses on the false teaching they are spreading and the damage they are doing. In a way it does not matter who they are. If they are teaching false doctrine, they need to be silenced.

Biggest Opponent False Teachers

It is interesting to note that the biggest opponents Timothy faces are false teachers.

- Not oppression from the Romans.
- Not persecution from the Jews.
- Not worldly allure of pleasure or power.

No, his opponents were people who claimed to be Christians who were using God's word wrongly. Using God's word in a way that generates doubt.

Application – Truth Matters

Satan knows it well that what we believe influences our thoughts and actions. He too understands that for long term outcomes it is better to teach a man to fish than to give him a fish.

A Christian may stumble in the face of persecution or the lure of worldly pleasure. They may be weakened for a time, but then when they remember the promises of God and the truths about God, they get back up.

As far as Satan is concerned, it is far more effective to get the people of God to believe lies, and that way, they will have zero resilience in the face of temptation.

- No anchor in the storm.
- No foundation to stand on.
- No faith in the promises of God.
- And eventually no Good news to save them.

Satan is the father of lies, and the sworn enemy of the church. His attack on truth, if nothing else should remind us the importance of truth in our lives.

Application - Truth swamped in the information age

All the more so today, Satan tries to deceive the saints with lies. And lies are all the easier to get into our thoughts and hearts.

We have countless sources of information. We live in the age of information. But not the age of truth.

Truth is much harder to find. And truth is easily drowned out by the thousands other voices claiming your attention. The thousands of voices which are trying to shape your belief.

Today, truth is attacked simply by placing thousands of absurd trivialities alongside it. The pillars of truth are lost in the swamp of vain discussions.

The internet has made us able to access so much information.

But has the flood of information drowned the truth that can only be received from the preaching of the word in the local church?

Has the flood of information swept you away from seeking help from faithful saints who know you and love you.

Do you turn to randoms on the internet to answer your life-changing questions?

If you had doubts about the goodness of God in your suffering where would you turn to for answers?

Or if you struggled with same sex attraction who would you approach for counsel?

Or if you need advice about parenting or about marriage where to you go?

On the internet, you will always find a voice to confirm your bias, or to confirm your sinful desire.

We often want the lies to be true.

But why is it more natural for you to turn to randoms on the internet who have no interest or concern for you?

Why does it feel strange to turn to the older saints in the church, and to the church Elders who love you and want to care for you?

As you live in the information age, be careful and wise as you make use of technology.

What you hold to be true will define you. Take much care what you let shape your beliefs.

Things are as urgent now for us as they were for Timothy in Ephesus.

False teachers are Perverting the Law

Notice how Paul continues to describe the false teachers in verse 6-7.

*⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into **vain discussion**, ⁷ **desiring to be teachers of the law**, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make **confident assertions**.*

Now these teachers are confident in their assertions. There is a boldness in their speech.

They are even using God's law as a basis of their teaching. They want to be teachers of the law. Yet they have swerved from the truth.

They have wandered away from the core message of the Gospel and spend their time in vain discussions that only promote speculations and doubts

Not only are they arrogant, wanting to be teachers of the law and making confident assertions, but they are also ignorant. They do not know what they are talking about!

- They make mountains out of mole hills.
- They make much of minor points.
- They fill up their teaching with vain discussions about myths and genealogies.
- Springboarding from the Law of God, but completely missing the point.
- All for the sake of applause and the approval of men.

The exact misuse of the law is not explicit in these verses, but in chapter 4, Paul condemns the legalistic use of the law. It seems these false teachers were teaching that a person had to keep the law in one way or another in order to be saved.

So these teachers were making much of minor points in scripture, filling people with worthless information, and doubt. And making those minor speculations a requirement of salvation.

So, not only are non-essential things discussed at length, but the important and the life-giving truths are neglected.

Doubt is nurtured by simply neglecting the important truths, all in the name of "studying God's word".

Application - Don't major on the minors

This sounds all too familiar to the false teachers in our day and age:

- A verse out of context.
- A strong personality,
- a convicting tone
- and people listen and are deceived.

But let us also look at ourselves. Yes, be careful about what you hear, even when spoken confidently.

But also be careful what you say, especially what you say with confidence.

- Is it a minor point that is only going to stir arguments?
- Is it going to edify your brothers and sisters or
- is it going to lead to vain discussions and mere speculations?

Link

Let us not be known as people who major on minor issues, a people who indulge in vain discussion which only results in doubt.

But on the contrary let us be known as a church who majors on the life changing power of the Gospel.

Which brings us to the second part of our study: The Fruit of Love

Part 2 – The Fruit of Love

Stewards

God has certain purposes for giving us his Word. There is something concrete and significant that He means to

communicate with us. Not speculations or vain discussion.

Paul and Timothy have been entrusted with God's Word as stewards.

Look at verse 4 again

⁴ [Timothy is to charge the false teachers not to teach false doctrine] *nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations **rather than the stewardship^[a] from God that is by faith.***

A stewardship has been given. There is a redemptive plan that has been communicated. This plan is received by faith. It is received by a confident trust in the promises of God.

Timothy and Paul have been given a command by God, as stewards, to proclaim God's Word, to proclaim God's redemptive plan.

A plan and a work that can be trusted, and in which we can have full confidence.

Using God's word to produce vain discussions and speculation, by definition, undermines faith. There is no assurance or confidence associated with vain discussions and speculations, therefore these undermine the redemptive work of God.

Love for the false teachers and the congregation

In verse 5 we get more detail of this stewardship:

⁵ *The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

The aim of the charge or the stewardship, or this authoritative command given by God, is love.

The reason Timothy is to have these hard conversations, and confront the false teachers is for the sake of love. He is to use the Word of God rightly which will produce love.

For the sake of the congregation (and the false teachers). That they would know, experience and live out love.

Power of the Gospel diluted

- A real love.
- A love everyone seeks to find.
- A love that only comes from self-denial and worship of God.
- A love that can only be found in the Gospel.

The Gospel has power to save and to produce this love in people. But if you dilute the message, you dilute the power. If you dilute the power, there is no power to be made right with God or to change. No power to truly experience love.

In Romans 1:16-17 Paul wrote:

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, ^[e] as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."^[f]

This is what Timothy was to stand up for. Timothy too, must not be ashamed of the Gospel.

Love is the fruit of the preached word

With the aim of the Gospel being love why is there so much opposition? Why is there a temptation to be ashamed of the Gospel?

Is Love not what most people seek after, and what they hope to find in life. Even in our society, love is greatly prized. Love is elevated above all virtues.

At face value the word is the same, but the thing the world and God describe as love are fundamentally different. They are in fact complete opposites.

Love, **for the world**, basically means self-love, anything that makes me fulfilled, or happy or comfortable, or fills me with a sense of purpose. Anything that makes me feel good.

On the other hand, Christian love, Gospel produced love is self-denying and God glorifying. 1 John 3:16 says:

¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Being willing to put to the side your

- desires,
- comforts,
- preferences,
- needs.

To put aside those things you find satisfaction in and purpose in. Laying all those aside for the sake of others.

All to the glory of God.

Love is to lay down your life. Not only in a final act of heroism or martyrdom, but in a continual, ongoing process of self-denial.

To love in the Christian sense is to imitate Christ who denied all his rights, humbled himself by taking the

form of a man, and ultimately denying even his human rights, when he allowed himself to be murdered on the cross.

Application - Gospel plea - Only means to save

Now we are not to think that we too should allow ourselves to be murdered to fulfil Christian love.

When Jesus died, he was fulfilling a very specific task.

He died in order that you would not have to experience the ultimate death.

You see, our self-love, that our society is obsessed with, and that each of us indulges in, is proof of our rebellious heart. Our self-love shows that we are on throne of our lives instead of God rightly being on the throne

- We follow our own rules instead of His.
- We follow our desires instead of His.
- We are loyal to ourselves instead of Him.
- We feel entitled to pleasure and plenty when we deserve the opposite.

As rebellious creatures we deserve to be punished. We deserve eternity in hell.

He deserves absolute praise and honour and glory, but he gave up everything he deserved to give us life. He died on the cross to pay for the penalty of your rebellions.

That is the power of the Gospel, which saves those who believe it.

That is the power of the Gospel which can save **you** if you would believe it.

Are you ready to accept that you deserve hell, but that Christ died to give you what you do not deserve. He died to give you Eternal life.

He promises that if you trust in him, you will be saved.

Love comes from a changed heart

It is only from accepting Christ as your saviour that you can experience true love, true satisfaction and true purpose.

Notice from verse 5 where this love issues from.

Where this love flows from:

⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Love comes from the soul of a person who has been changed by God. A person who has accepted Jesus as his saviour and lord.

Love stems from a Pure heart - The control centre of the person is no longer bound by sinful, selfish desires. The heart that has been renewed, it has been brought from death to life, as it were. The heart now has good and pure desires. The heart has the ability to want the things of God.

Love also stems from a good conscience. - The blood of Christ has paid the debt that you own to God. There is no more guilt to carry. No more shame to carry. Your actions and desire to love is not an attempt to clear your guilty conscience, not an attempt to atone for your own sin. Christ has already paid the price in full, and there is no more debt to pay.

And thirdly, Love issues from a Sincere faith - Our life of love, of self-denial, flows from what we believe about God and ourselves. What we believe we deserve

and what we believe God is like. A sincere faith is built on the Word of God. It is about taking God at his word and knowing that he is faithful. Sincere faith in the word of God produces love.

Application – Gospel is the only way to change

The Gospel produces the fruit of love by saving a person.

But the fruit of the Gospel does not stop there.

The Gospel also produces the fruit of love by changing a person to be more like Christ.

If we are to be more like Christ, we are to preach the gospel to ourselves every day.

- Every day, remember that you are a great sinner and that God is a great saviour.
- Every day, remember that you do not deserve anything.
- Every day, remember what you did deserve.
- Every day, turn to God in repentance when you have let your sinful desires sit on the throne of your heart.
- Every day, turn to God in dependence, knowing it is all about him and his glory.

As we preach the Gospel to ourselves every day, this will produce in us a *pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith*.

This will produce the fruit of Love

Link

There is another fruit which comes from the proper use of God's word discussed in this passage, and that is the fruit of restraint.

Which brings us to our third and final point.

Part 3 – The Fruit of Restraint

Exposition

Law good

The false teachers were using God's word, and specifically the Law of God in a completely wrong way. They did not understand it and were undermining the redemptive plan of God by their misuse of it. Paul is quick to point out that it is the misuse of the law that is the problem, not the law itself.

Look at verse 8

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

In verse 9-11 Paul points out one good use of the law of God: Restraining Evil.

The law is not to be used as a ladder to get merit from God, as the false teachers were trying to do.

One of the good uses of the law is to restrain evil in a political sense. To stop humans from being as bad as they could be.

We know that the Law of God has two other uses:

1. The law is also used as a mirror to show us our sin and need for a saviour.
2. And also the law is used as a guide to holy living. It helps us to know what pleases God.

But as Paul seeks to promote the goodness of the law in response to the False Teachers misuse of the Law, he just points out the restraining use of the law.

Law not for the Just

So in verse 9 Paul explains:

9 understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane,

When Paul uses the word “Just” here we should read it as “just before men” nor “just before God”. We can think of it as a “law abiding citizen”.

We can make this distinction, because the list of sins, that describe the “unjust” are crimes the state would punish.

So the law in the restraining sense is for the lawless and the disobedient. For those who need to be restrained, those who will disrupt the peace of society and commit crimes.

List of criminal offences follows the commandments 5-9

In verses 9 and 10 we have a list of crimes. And this list follows the outline of the 5th commandment to the 9th commandments. The list does not include any crimes associated with converting since the state cannot punish that.

This list of crimes are seen as crimes in almost all societies.

They reflect God’s law written on our hearts, which societies put into practice in some way or another.

These commandments are commonly known as the “second table of the law”.

Laws which will bring order to society, in all times and all places, regardless of who or what is worshiped.

It is a common grace given to all people to restrain evil.

Obey father and mother

So the Law is *for those who strike their fathers and mothers*. Here we have an extreme breaking of the 5th commandment. Some translations have translated it as “Those who kill their father and mothers.

Our government still see parents to be the first authority in a child’s life.

Our government still supports this God given authority, although there has been significant hindering of exercising that authority through the biblical use of the rod.

Murderers

Paul goes on. The law is *for murderers*, - Here we see the 6th Commandment. The law give the government the duty to protect the sanctity of life. To protect the weak form being killed by the strong.

Sadly, this duty of the government is greatly neglected in our government. Murdering your own baby is no longer seen as a crime in New Zealand. Abortions are legal up until birth. And the elderly are being encouraged and given a pathway to end their own lives.

Adultery

The law, in the restraining sense, in the political sense, is also for *the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality*,

Here we see the 7th commandment being upheld. There is a place for the government to restrict immorality and homosexuality.

This is not to say there is an expectation where the state is the moral police, but legalising same-sex marriage is in direct violation of this duty. Here also our government has been too liberal.

Stealing

The law is also for *enslavers*,^[b] - This could also be translated as kidnappers. People stealing other humans to make a profit off them.

This is an extreme breaking of the 8th Commandment. Not just stealing food, to feed your family. Or stealing gold to be rich. But stealing a human being and selling them into misery.

Human trafficking is a big issue in the world today, and we are grateful for many laws and agencies that are seeking to stop this dreadful work. God's law written on their hearts motivates them to restrain this evil.

Lying

Finally on the list, the Law is for *liars, perjurers* - This is breaking the 9th commandment. It is hard for the police to catch everyone who lies. But lying in the form of fraud or tax evasion or other false representation are punishable offences.

And perjury, the act of telling a lie when under oath in a court of law is punishable to up to 7 year imprisonment here in New Zealand.

Whatever else

It is for these kinds of people that the Law of God, in the restraining sense, is useful and good.

Paul finishes the list of these crimes with *whatever else is contrary to sound^[c] doctrine*. It does seem a surprising finish to the list of crimes, but all of these evil acts come from a heart that believes lies. From hearts that believe false teaching about who God is and who man is. This is what false teaching will lead to. This is where the fruit of speculations, vain discussions and doubt will lead to.

Our nation is a living example of that.

Gospels is consistent with this use of the law

In verse 11 Paul stresses that this use of the Law is consistent with the Gospel.

[The law is for the criminal, not for the law abiding citizen] ¹¹ *in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.*

When the law is correctly applied to restrain sin, it is in full accordance with the gospel. The Gospel is not meant to govern pagan nations, but to save our soul. And likewise the Law written on our hearts is not meant to save us, but to restrain evil.

Conclusion

Friends, every use of God's word will bear fruit.

As we have seen, it can produce fruit of speculations, vain discussions and doubt.

Or it can produce fruit of love through the Gospel and restraint through the government.

Friends, do you hear Paul's urgency? Do you hear his charge to use God's word rightly? And to listen and believe only those who use God's word rightly.

The damage of using God's Word wrongly is devastating.

It destroys families, destroys churches, shakes nations, undermines people's faith and worst of all keeps people on the path to hell.

But using God's word rightly is life-giving.

It strengthens families, it unites churches, it brings peace to nations, grows people's faith and best of all it gives the confidence of eternity in Heaven with Jesus our Lord.

Friends, let us take great care to use God's word rightly and produce fruit of restraint and love in our lives and in our nation.

Let us pray,