



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Timothy 1:1-11

“Strange Doctrines”

1 Timothy

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we do thank you for your goodness and your grace. And we come before you this evening and acknowledge that we praise you for it, for we realize that apart from your grace, we would not be your children. We would be as we once were children of wrath sons and daughters of disobedience, but by your grace you've changed us and you have not only given us new life that you've given us you're in errant word to study, to learn from, to learn about you and learn about ourselves. And so we opened the Scriptures tonight and begin a new series. We pray that you'd bless us and teach us and make it a profitable time for us.

We are so thankful that you have blessed us and not only with your word and with new hearts, new capabilities, which enable us to understand your revelation, but we have a divine teacher as well. We have the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who indwells our lives and who guides us into all truth. And so we pray that his ministry would go unhindered this evening that you prepare our hearts for a time of study together. Bless us as we do study and then bless our time of prayer that follows as we come again before the throne of grace. We look to you to bless us in this hour, and others that are meeting in this hour, the young people bless them as well. And we pray things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] We are beginning a new series this evening and the book of first Timothy. In my first lesson might be a little bit too ambitious. I'm going to look in the first 11 verses of the first chapter, but I think we can cover them all in appropriate amount of time. We're going to read them first and then will begin our exposition. 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse one. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, according to the commandment of God our

Savior and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope to Timothy my true child in the faith grace, mercy and peace from God the father and Christ Jesus our Lord/As I urged you upon my departure from Macedonia remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God, which is by faith/But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things have turned aside to fruitless discussion 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/But we know that the laws good if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers or for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurer's and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching/According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I had been entrusted.”

1 Timothy is one of three books in the New Testament, known as the “pastoral epistles” the other two are 2 Timothy and Titus. These titles of the books are taken from the names of Paul's to assistance in the ministry, to whom he wrote those books. They were given the title pastoral in the early part of the 18th century because they contained construction on pastoral work in the churches. Work it was to be done or instruction that was to be given in shepherding the sheep and correcting error that was going on. So much of what this book is about and as well as Titus is about the church.

For example, in 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul writes, “I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” So in this book Paul gives instruction on the church that something of the theme of this book. There's more to it than that, but as we go through the book, you can see a great deal of instruction on elders and deacons and what the church is to do with widows and how the church is to care for them and other issues like that. There's a lot of instruction here of a personal nature, of advice to Timothy, but much of it has to do with the church. And it's the same with the book of Titus, he deals with many of the same issues that are dealt with in 1 Timothy, subjective elders and godly living in the church. So much of this book has to do with the church. Pastoral concerns that are expressed in the instruction that Paul gives.

Timothy and Titus are the men to whom these books were written - not going to say much about Titus tonight – Timothy, though, of the two is the better known of those two individuals. He was from Lysistrata, which is in southern Asia Minor. His father, we know, was a pagan and his mother was a **Jewis**. And under the influence of his mother and his grandmother, both who became Christians, Timothy was raised on the Scriptures. Paul speaks of that in 2 Timothy 1:5 and then in chapter 3:15. So Timothy had that kind of experience in his home, at least from the side of his mother, but not from his father’s father was a pagan.

Timothy was probably converted through the ministry of the apostle Paul during his first missionary journey when he went through those southern cities of Asia Minor and went to Lysistrata and preached the gospel. It was on his second missionary journey that Timothy joined Paul and Silas, when they passed through Lysistrata. Luke writes of that in Acts 16:1. Paul, we’re told, circumcised him in order to avoid antagonizing the Jews, who would have known that his father was a pagan. Otherwise, the synagogues would have not allowed Timothy to enter. And as you know, going through the book of Acts, that’s where Paul’s ministry generally took place when he entered the city. He found the synagogue, he entered there and preach the gospel until he was not wanted any longer and then would move on, having brought with him a group of people out of the synagogue. But if Timothy was uncircumcised people knew that his father was a pagan, he would not have been allowed to go in. And so Paul circumcised Timothy.

Now Titus was not circumcised. We know that from Galatians chapter 2. Titus was an early associate of Paul’s. It’s not mentioned in the book of Acts, but obviously from Galatians 2, he was an early associate of Paul’s and he went up to Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem and Paul made a point of not circumcising him. Titus was obviously a Gentile, a man of pagan background that he wasn’t going to circumcise him because that was an issue of the gospel. With Titus it was an issue of the purity of the gospel. With Timothy it was a matter of the progress of the gospel. So he was circumcised, joined Paul early in his ministry, traveled with him on that second missionary journey, and then on the third missionary journey.

And now toward the end of Paul’s ministry and his life he writes this first of two letters to Timothy. The occasion for the letter was a problem in Ephesus. Now Paul had warned the elders of Ephesus that there were problems on the horizon. Not that he saw them at that time that he, in effect, prophesied that there were going to be problems. In fact,

you might turn over to ask chapter 20, where Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders for the last time. He gives them parting words, he gives them words of encouragement, he gives them warnings. And we read in verse 27, “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.” Paul was, therefore, what, three years in Ephesus? He taught them the Scriptures. He went to the word of God. He gave them the full array of the doctrines of Scripture. He taught them the whole counsel of God, the full purpose of God.

And he says in verse 28, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the Church of God which he purchased with his own blood/I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after that.”

Well, things can go bad very quickly. And that can even be the case in assemblies in local churches where the word of God has been taught and churches have heard the whole purpose and the full counsel of God. But Paul left Ephesus he left those Ephesian elders and he went on to Jerusalem, there he was arrested, he was in prison in Caesarea. Then he was taken from Caesarea to Rome and he stood trial in Rome and we would assume from the circumstances of these letters, and other things that Paul was released after that first imprisonment. And from Rome he went east to the churches of Asia Minor and then to the churches of Greece and Macedonia. And while he was in Asia Minor, when he’s visiting the church of Ephesus, he learned of the influence the false teachers were having in the church.

This isn’t a great deal of time that has elapsed, it’s some years since Paul gave that warning to the Ephesian elders. It’s not a great of expansive time. And in a time of Paul’s absence false teachers have arisen. False doctrine was being taught. And so Paul had other things to do, other places to go. The schedule was probably rather pressing. He needed to go on to Greece and Macedonia, so he directed Timothy to remain in Ephesus and deal with the problem. Gave him instruction on what to do and then he went on to Macedonia and after arriving there, he wrote 1 Timothy, reminding Timothy of the instruction that he had given to him and giving him further instructions to give him direction and resolve in the task that he had assigned to him.

The book opens with a greeting to Timothy, verse 1, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, according to the commandment of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope.” Paul was an apostle by command. Normally Paul wrote that he was an apostle by

the will of God. But here is my commandment, or by a command that God had given him, which suggests a royal command, a command of the King. Now that suggests God’s will, so there’s nothing in conflict with that. This is not the normal way that Paul would state the origin of his apostleship. But it does indicate the origin of that apostleship. He didn’t choose to be apostle. Apostles didn’t choose to be apostles. Disciples didn’t choose to be disciples.

You see, that is Jesus would walk along the shore of Galilee. He called Peter, he called John, he called Andrew. He called these men to himself and he called Paul to himself as well. He called him to be an apostle, in the midst of the Paul’s rebellion there on the Damascus Road. He didn’t just call him, he is commanded to be an apostle. So Paul emphasizes something of his authority here as an apostle. He was a man sent out strictly speaking, what the word apostle means. He was sent by God on a divine mission, and invested with divine authority; that’s an apostle.

Now this may seem like a formal greeting to a close friend. But the contents of this letter, we should remember he’s writing to Timothy and he’ll describe him in very personal terms, and we might’ve expected something less formal. Timothy certainly knows that Paul’s an apostle, but while this is a personal letter. It would also be a letter that would be read in public and in fact it’s evident that Paul expected this letter to be read to the congregation because at the end of the book and chapter 6 in verse 21 he writes, “Grace be with you” and the word you is plural, so he’s expecting more than just Timothy to be reading it. And he expects it to be read out loud in the assembly.

And when that was done all who heard - everyone in the church at Ephesus - will hear Paul’s authorization for Timothy to carry out the duties that had been assigned to him if there were some there that were questioning that. And they’re probably would be. Because he’s there to put down false teaching and false teachers were not going to want to have him put that down. And so here is the authority for what Timothy was doing. He was a representative of the apostle Paul and he was doing his work in the authority of the apostle Paul.

So it was important that Paul begin a letter with that statement an apostle of Christ Jesus. But it was also a healthy reminder to Timothy of what he was asked to do. It was not simply asked to carry out the request of a friend, but he was asked to do this by an apostle. In fact, he was ordered in effect by the apostle to carry out this great task. So it’s a reminder that the work he was given is given to him by an apostle. It is work that is very

important and there is an urgency to this work. Now there is also encouragement and this first statement. It's not just a formality. Its formal, but it's not a formality. It's a great deal of encouragement that given to Timothy here.

The apostle refers to God our Savior and Christ our hope. And at first statement reminds us that salvation is God's work, it's of the Lord. In fact, the whole work of salvation, all of it is God's work, and so Timothy is, in effect, being reminded that the work that he's to do is God's work and God will supply for the task that lies ahead of him. This is God's work. Salvation is of the Lord and Christ is our hope. That's a good reminder for us as well because this world is not our hope. We tend to put our hope in the things of this world and the material blessings of this world, and we plan for that. And there's a place for that, of course, planning ahead and being financially wise and all of that. But we tend to invest hope in this world. And what he's being reminded of is our hope is not in this world is in Christ. And the hope we have in Christ is a future hope in the kingdom that he's going to bring upon this world and we are to be living for that.

I don't know that Paul has all these thoughts in his mind, but that was the purpose of these two statements that he's making to Timothy. But it's certainly true and would have been an encouragement to Timothy to remember, “My hope is not here, and what people think of me is not what is important. I'm living for the hope that's to come and I'm to be living for the Lord Jesus Christ.” And so the greeting here, while it is formal in a sense that Paul speaks to himself as an apostle, it's also very encouraging and very instructive. But the greeting wasn't devoid of affection, he's writing to a close, personal friend and he expresses the personal affection that he has for Timothy in verse two where he calls him his true child in the faith. Now the original text doesn't actually say my true child just true child in faith. But that is likely the meaning. The idea probably is my child or my true child of the faith, because later in 2 Timothy 2:1 the pronoun “my” is used in regard to Timothy, my child.

Paul had a close connection with Timothy. He thought of him as his spiritual father, he was God's agent for Timothy's conversion. He was a man that exercised a very significant, significant formative influence on Timothy over the many years they spent together. He instructed him. He corrected him, he led him by example in many ways. And so he knew Timothy, could speak of him like this and speak of him confidently as his true child or his genuine child. Which is to be seen in opposition to an illegitimate child. It is in contrast to that. He's true, he's not a legitimate. He's a genuine child because over the

years, Paul has seen the nature of his faith, the nature of his life. He knew that he is a true child of the faith.

His prayer for Timothy is for Grace, mercy and peace from God the father and Christ Jesus, who is our hope. There's a lot of theology in that prayer. First of all, these three virtues come from God. And the fact that Paul couples God the father, with Christ Jesus in giving these virtues, these blessings indicates that Paul belief in the full deity of Christ. They are together, they are the source of this. And so Christ is the eternal son of God. Very God of very God. Secondly, the prayer indicates our total dependence on the Lord day-to-day. We need grace to enable us to serve. We're incapable of that, apart from the grace of God, we don't have the ability. And we need mercy because we so often fail in God's merciful to us, so he prays for these two things. Timothy faces a large task and he prays that God supply him with grace and mercy. And the result of both grace and mercy is peace. And peace is what guards our hearts, it's what keeps us in confidence, keeps is encouraged.

In fact, Paul states that its piece that guards our hearts and minds when he writes to the Philippians in chapter 4 and verse 7. That is the experience. Peace is the experience of a life that's lived in harmony with God. It is the result of living in obedience to him and Timothy would need that he would need peace as he faced a very difficult task of opposing men of error, and we can probably assume net of some influence in the church. Well, that was the problem in Ephesus, verse 3, “As I urge you upon my departure from Macedonia, remain on it Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not teach strange doctrines/It is heterous doctrines.” Different doctrines. They're not Orthodox, they're heterodox. They're doctrines that are not the same as the teachings that Paul gave.

These are heterous. Different from what he had instructed them when he told them or taught them the whole purpose of God. He laid it out for them, had given them years of instruction, very thorough instruction and now something's coming that's completely different from that. Well, there are people and churches that like that kind of teaching. Maybe you've seen that. I've seen that. Been given tapes to listen to. People want me to listen to these tapes at various times, various subjects and they're very often on things that are new. Not altogether new probably, but some new idea. People seem to be very attracted to that. They're very much like the Athenians.

You remember how Luke describes them in chapter 17 in verse 21. These intellectuals would go up to the Areopagus and they would talk and they would hear about

the newest thing. In fact, he says “They spent their time telling or hearing something new.” That entertain them. That’s what they like to fill their time with and that was a problem with some in the church of Ephesus, just as it is a problem for the church today. Maybe here at Believers Chapel. People like something new, something interesting. And so their ears that were itching for that kind of thing in Ephesus.

What was being taught is described in verse 4, myths and endless genealogies which give rise to mere speculations rather than furthering the administration of God, which is by faith. Myths and genealogies is probably a reference to Jewish legends and stories because later in the book of Titus 1:14. Paul warns against paying attention to Jewish myths. These were embellished accounts of Jewish history in which rabbis attempted to rewrite their ancient history. And, and then they would often remove some of the ethical difficulties in the lives of the patriarchs and we know there are plenty of those. We go through the book of Genesis, we’re puzzled that these great men live the lives that they did sometimes.

Abraham did some foolish things, Jacob did foolish things. And so what these rabbis would do is they’d go back and made me write the stories or write legends about them that made them grander than they were. Jacob, for example, are never deceived anyone. In the book of jubilees, the idea of free will is stressed. God chose Abraham, because God foresaw that Abraham would choose him. Don Carson, commenting on this, characterized these rabbinic writings as “whitewashing and bragging. “ And they marked a shift as he points out from sovereign grace that’s taught in the Bible to merit theology. So we can probably conclude safely that there was a lot of free will that was being taught mixed up in a strange doctrines that these individuals were teaching.

Herman woke in his book, “This is my God.” Which is not a Christian book. In fact it’s something of an apologetic for Orthodox Judaism. Trying to interest Jews in becoming Orthodox. Written a number of years ago, I think back in the 1950s. But in the book he writes of about rabbinic students, so he studied the Talmud and when they would come across these fables and fantasies as he called them, these myths that Paul speaks about they’d come upon them with delight. They’re interesting stories and they’re entertaining and so they would do that. Well, they are curious, they’re entertaining. Myths are that. And Christians today like to be entertained by them as well.

Someone gave me a tape once - this is the thought that I’ve had, as I’ve been contemplating this problem with speculations that Paul describes - someone a year or so

ago, gave me a tape that an individual had done and he was teaching on the Nephilim from Genesis 6. Not much said about the Nephilim in Genesis 6, but this guy spent an hour and a half talking about the Nephilim. And I think the title was “the return of the Nephilim” which is very intriguing. I finally started fast forwarding. I was like, what is the point of this guy is making? He went on and on and on and I can’t even tell you what his point was. Now he seemed very learned and people were very interested in the Nephilim. People want to know these kinds of things.

Now there’s a place for knowing that because that’s biblical but people are interested in stories, in speculations about things that the Bible doesn’t go into, at least not in much depth. And we see this and this particular problem with the people of Ephesus, they were curious about myths. But myths are not true, they’re myths. They don’t ground a person in the knowledge of God. Nothing good comes from them. Nothing good comes from them if you’re seriously studying them as something that’s going to help you and teach you. “They only produce speculation” Paul writes, “and they don’t further, the administration of God.” They don’t further God’s stewardship of the church, his care in his management for the household of God. That management occurs in the realm of faith. Faith is the principle of God’s administration of the church, not speculations. And Christian faith is produced and developed by the word of God.

When we depart from Scripture, we depart from God’s method, from his administration. The aim or goal of the ministry, according to verse 5, is not abstruse reasoning, it’s not questions of the nature that they are described here, speculations. But love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Now that seems to me that what he’s saying is, Christ’s likeness, being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That’s the goal. That wasn’t the goal of these teachers, of strange doctrines. Their main interest was intellectual satisfaction, as one of the commentators just put it. Now that’s not a bad goal in and of itself, intellectual satisfaction. If it’s from the word of God that we’re seeking to gain that. Now that’s never the final goal, but it must be a goal, to be intellectual satisfied, to learn and come to some understanding because it’s from our knowledge of the word of God that we learn about God. And it’s from our knowledge of God that we grow in love.

Love is the goal. And love, first of all, comes from, Paul says a “pure heart.” Now, in the Old Testament, the heart is not really the place of the emotions. Emotions come from it. But in the Old Testament the heart represents the essential part of man, the

intellectual, and the moral part of man. So love, first of all, proceeds from a pure heart, a regenerated heart, a cleanse life which is a justified life. And that person who is justified has a good conscience. Is a conscience that's cleared of guilt and is made obedient to God. It operates according to God's standards.

In the third spiritual condition of love is a sincere faith, a genuine faith, which is in Jesus Christ. This is a born-again individual. And that's what he's describing here. Genuine love proceeds from a new life which is lived by faith we just sincere which is consistent with the word of God. And those characteristics grow and expand as the person grows and develops, which occurs through the word of God. This life is strengthened and developed by instruction in the word of God. That kind of life, which produces love, that he's describing here, is a Christlike life. And this was the goal for Paul in the ministry.

You may remember in Galatians 4:19, he tells the Galatians about his concern for them and his ministry to them, and the nature of it and he said that he “labored like a woman in child birth until Christ is formed in them.” So he was deeply involved in Christ, being formed in them being born in them. And that's the goal of the ministry. The failure of these false teachers is traced to the fact that they had strayed from that goal. That wasn't their interest at all. Instead, they desire to be teachers of the law. Now there's nothing wrong with studying law. There's nothing wrong with being a teacher of the law. There's nothing wrong with being an Old Testament professor, a scholar of Hebrew and of the Old Testament. Learning the law and teaching the law. We should teach the law. The law should be taught from the pulpits of churches.

But these men were not in that category. These were Old Testament professors. They were dogmatic about things they did understand. Verse 7, “They do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.” Not very confident about what they said about the law, but it was all out of ignorance. We can hear people that teach like that, they can teach with great confidence, they can be very dogmatic. And that lends an error of authority to what they're doing and what they're saying. But from what Paul is saying here, dogmatism, confidence in what one is saying is no evidence of the truth.

You've seen people who talk that are not genuine Christians that are not true teachers of the word of God to teach with great confidence. Maybe even arrogance. That's no sign of the truth. These men were that way. They wanted to be teachers of the law, the Paul said they don't understand the law, they don't have the truth. Now Paul's reference to

them as teachers of the law is not intended to indicate a bad reflection of the law itself. Paul had a high regard for the law and to make that clear that he's not against the law. He digresses a little bit in verses 8 through 11 to explain the function of the law.

He calls it good, “But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully.” And then he explains that the lawful use of the law is not for a righteous person. The proper use of the law, the lawful use of the law is for an unrighteous person. In Paul's vocabulary, the righteous person is the justified person. The person who through faith in Jesus Christ has received the gift of righteousness, we're seeing that in the book of Romans. He or she, the believer in Jesus Christ is justified, not made righteous; that's not what justification means. It does not mean that they are infused with righteousness and their life is being changed. The sanctification that's taking place, but that's not justification.

Justification is the basis for sanctification. Justification is a legal term. It speaks of a declaration by the judge, the judge of all the earth, in which he says “This believer is righteous disbeliever has righteous standing performing this believer is a sinner, but I consider this sinner to be righteous in my site.” That's justification. “The law is not for that person.” Paul says. It's not for the Christian. So its function has to do with the non-Christian, the nonbeliever, Paul makes that clear in other places. He says it as clearly as can be said right here. But he says it elsewhere in Romans 6:14, “For you are not under law but under grace.” In Romans 7:4, he states that “We have died to the law through the body of Christ.” So the Christian is dead to the law. Law has no more authority over us than former dead husband or dead wife has over a living husband or living wife. That's the analogy that he draws.

Now that doesn't mean that the law has no relationship to the believer. It does have a relationship to us. We learn from the law. We learn about the holiness and righteousness of God, and we study the law, we learn these things. It's good to learn about the holiness and righteousness of God from the law, but the law can't produce that holiness or that righteousness in a person's life, it has no power to do that. The righteousness of God is produced by the spirit of God in the new life that we have through regeneration and faith. That's what Paul says in Romans 8:4, “So that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us/We do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.”

The believer is not under the Law of Moses as his or her guide. The Holy Spirit has taken the place of the law. As Doctor Johnson has put it many times that we are not under the law as a code. Our guide is not the Law of Moses. Our guide is not a code is a person.

It is the Holy Spirit. And as we walk after the spirit, as we walk according to the spirit, the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the law, the holiness of God, that's produced in us. In fact, that's the evidence that we are children of God. His righteousness is seen in us. Our lives are lived in conformity to God's holiness and righteousness.

But the Law of Moses, as a rule of life as a discipline is not for the believer. It is for the nonbeliever. And that is what Paul teaches throughout the New Testament. And we see a particularly in the books of Galatians and Romans. In Galatians 3:19 he wrote “Why the law then? Why was it given? It was added because of transgressions” now the law wasn't there when Abraham was justified. We don't see it throughout his life or in the centuries that follow. Before the law was given the stress was not laid on sin, the stress was laid on the promise of salvation and the promises that would come as a result of the work of Christ. But the need to know about sin was very real and so that's why the law was given, with Moses to expose sin, and that is its function.

Romans 3:20, “For through the law comes the knowledge of sin.” The law doesn't justify sin, it can't do that. It's powerless to do that. It's powerless to justify. It's powerless as a way of salvation. Wasn't given for that purpose. It was given to show us that we can't be saved in our own strength. It was given to us to show us that we need to be saved by another. It was given to expose sin. Romans 3:20, “Through the law comes the knowledge of sin.” Romans 5:20, “The law came in so that the transgression would increase, but where sin increased grace abounded all the more.” So all is not only given to expose sin, but it was given to expose sin and its abundance. It was given to increase sin so that sinners would see how sinful they really are.

And then in chapter 7 of Romans versus 7-13 Paul develops the idea of the law in citing sin and stirring it up and a particular commandment that did that. It's one of the 10 Commandments. It's the 10th of the 10, coveting. Not to covet. Thou shall not covet. And what happened to Paul, well, he started coveting. In cited sin. Now he says it's not the fault of the law. The law doesn't cause sin, it's not the source of sin. This sin was there within him. The law simply brought it to life. That which was there the full amount of it that was there is brought to full view, it's stirred up. It's in cited. That was the function of the law.

Now in Galatians 3:24, Paul describes the function of the law as preparatory for the nation, preparing it for the coming of the Messiah. And in verse 24, chapter 3, he compares the law to a slave or a tutor, a disciplinarian that a Roman family would employ or

engage - probably better to say engage - a slave in this task of being the disciplinarian of their children. So the slave was there to be with that child constantly, always overseeing where he went. He would teach him, but mainly with discipline him, keep them in line, keep them out of trouble, keep them safe in doing the right things. Keeping his schedule being in the right places, making sure he got to school on time and had his lunch and all of that. In preparation for adulthood. And he was with him all the time until he became an adult. And then when he became an adult, and the slave had no more authority over him.

And all law was like that for everybody, Paul says. It was designed to be a temporary measure to prepare the nation for the coming of the Messiah. So he writes in verses 24 and 25 of Galatians 3, “Therefore, the law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under tutor.” When Christ came the Mosaic Law ceased to be binding on the people of God. It served its purpose. Well that’s the function of the law, the 10 Commandments. To lead people to Christ, and it does that by exposing their sin and showing them their need of a Savior. It produces conviction of sin. And it is the 10 Commandments that Paul is referring to here - it doesn’t say that explicitly - but that seems to be clear from the way he describes the people who need the law. It fits with the 10 Commandments.

In verse 9 he states that, “The law is for those who are lawless and rebellious for the ungodly and sinners for the unholy and profane.” And all of that relates to the first tablet of the law. The first four commandments which are directed against sins against God. Sins of idolatry and taking the Lord’s name in vain. The second group of lawbreakers is given in verses nine and 10, and their sins are those which relate to the second table of the law, which are sins against men. The laws for those who kill their fathers or mothers for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching. The law is not for these people as a way of becoming righteous. It’s not for these people as a way of being justified, being saved. The law can’t save. It is for these people in order to convict them of their sin. To show them the kind of people that they are. And then, having shown them that in order to prepare them for the receiving of the gospel. Now that’s the function of the law.

But these men wanted to be teachers of the law were trying to put the church under law as a guide for Christians. Trying to convict sinners of their sin, and they were saying, “This is the way of life for you and the church.” Paul puts that in the category of strange doctrines. A misunderstanding of the law and he says, “Contrary to sound teaching or

wholesome teaching.” The law is not, as one of the older commentators put it, a ladder for reaching to higher attainments in goodness. That is achieved through the power of the Spirit of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we study the word of God and understand it correctly. In verse 11, Paul sums up what he is written in verses 8 through 10. He says that “The law is according to the glorious gospel.” It’s according to the glorious gospel and that it displays God’s glory. His purity, his Holiness and it does that to expose man’s lack of holiness, man’s unrighteousness.

We should use the law in that sense. We need to preach the law in that sense and convict men of their sin and their need of a Savior. And as Christians the righteousness of God, which is expressed in that law should be seen in our lives. We should be known as men and women who are holy and righteous, who are holy, as God is holy. If we can only be that by God’s grace. We need what Paul prayed for Timothy. We need grace, mercy and peace so. May God give us that. And may he and doing so make us like him. And men and women who are well grounded in the truth. Well, let’s conclude with that and end with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we do thank you for the truth that we have set forth here. We’re reminded of some things that can be true of us and that is we can go astray. And we can go astray by becoming intrigued by speculation. We can become entry by myths and questions of that nature. Guard us from that father. Give us a love for your truth, a love for the word of God that we might study it, know it and understand it and apply it to our lives properly. We pray that you would do that for us in this room, and for the entire church, for Believers Chapel. Make it a church filled with people who love your word and want to know it and study it. We thank you for Christ and for his death, and our behalf, and the righteousness we have because of him. It’s in his name we pray. Amen