



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Timothy 1:3-7

“Purity, Heresy, and Meaningless Talk”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of Thy word again. And we turn within anticipation to Paul's letter to Timothy. We pray that we may respond to the lessons that are contained within it and that we may not only respond negatively to the false doctrine, which so often prevalent about us, but respond positively to the injunctions to practical Christian living and growth. We pray that we may listen to the apostle's words with genuine interest and spiritual motivation produced by the Holy Spirit. We commit the hour to Thee. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Well, we're turning to the second of our series of studies in Paul, Timothy and the doctrine of the church or an exposition of 1 Timothy. And our subject for tonight is "Purity, Heresy, and Meaningless Talk" or "Sound Doctrine, Salvation, and Christian Love".

1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 3 through verse 7 is the Scripture reading. Now, you can tell from the opening verse, verse 3, that the Apostle had been at one at Ephesus with Timothy. And he speaks of how he urged Timothy to stay at Ephesus while he went into Macedonia, in northern Greece. We do not, incidentally, see any place in the Book of Acts where this situation is harmonious with that which is found in that book. So, it is

the feeling and has been for many years of many biblical scholars that what we have in 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy, and Titus is a period of time in Paul's life after his first Roman imprisonment. He was released from the imprisonment in which he wrote the prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Evidently was free for a certain period of time, carried on a certain ministry that had to do with the east, possibly the west. And then ultimately, remember, was retaken by the Romans and according to tradition put to death in Rome after his second Roman imprisonment, which is referred to by the Apostle in 2nd Timothy. So, he is free now, between his first imprisonment and his second imprisonment so far as we are able to reconstruct the life of the Apostle Paul.

Verse 3 then reads,

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that though mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith, so do. Now the end of the commandment, that is of the charge that I am giving and that you are to give Timothy. Now the end of the commandment is love out of pure heart and of a good conscious and of faith unfeigned from which some having some swerved, have turned aside, onto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor that about which they affirm."

Now, for a moment let's review the background of the apostle. In our last study, last week I sought first of all to indicate to you that 1 Timothy is primarily a pastoral letter. That is it is a letter in which the Apostle Paul deals with young Timothy and with matters that concern the shepherding of the flock of God. I do not mean by saying that, "It is a pastoral letter that Paul addressed Timothy as a modern pastor." It is quite frequent that you hear people say now, "Timothy was young pastor of a church, seeking to accommodate to Timothy, modern terminology of a pastor." But as you probably well

know there is no New Testament support whatsoever for the office of pastor in the modern sense, that is of an individual who has any kind of control over a local church. Certainly not the kind of pastor that is so prominent today; one who is kind of president of a corporation. This is a pastoral letter in the sense that Paul speaks to Timothy about matters that concern the shepherding of the flock. The occasion was Paul's desire that Timothy combat the novelties that existed at Ephesus, to which we have referred in the third verse, "That though mightest teach some, that they teach no different doctrine (no other doctrine)."

So the apostle wished to exhort Timothy in order that Timothy might combat the novelties that existed in the false teachers teaching around the city of Ephesus. The addressee, Timothy, is an apostolic legate, that is an ambassador of the apostle Paul; his personal representative. And that accounts for the fact that the apostle charges him to charge others that they teach no other doctrine. Timothy is able to speak with considerably authority because he is a representative of the Apostle Paul. Incidentally, this is not a kind of sectarian opinion on the part of me. I may have some sectarian opinions, but this is not one. It is generally agreed that Timothy and Titus were not pastors in the common sense; but apostolic legates, apostolic ambassadors, apostolic representatives.

For example, R.C.H Lenski, who has written a series of Lutheran commentaries on the New Testament, he refers to Timothy and Titus as apostolic legates. J.N.D Kelly, an Anglican, who has written a commentary on 1 Timothy and the other Pastoral Epistles, also refers to Timothy as an apostolic legate. This is not a special interpretation which I have invented. Now, occasionally I do invent them. I hope that you understand or I hope that you realize that most of the time when I invent an interpretation I warn you that it is my invention. And therefore, it's not to be regarded as the consensus of the Christian Church at all. But this is not an invention.

Timothy, then is an apostolic legate or his representative. Paul's purpose in writing 1 Timothy is very plain. The key being given, it would seem in chapter 3 verse 15, where he states, "But if I tarry long that though mayest know how though oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar, and ground of the truth." In other words, the theme of the epistle is the conduct that befits those who dwell in the house of God publicly and privately. So the epistle then is concerned with one's public deportment in the Church of God, and also with one's private deportment in the Church of God.

I think that we shall see that this Apostle has some very important things to say to members of local churches and specifically to the members of Believers Chapel. It will have some very important things to say about our deportment in the church of the living God. I spent a good bit of time last Wednesday night speaking about this so I'll try not to do that again. The heresy evidentially is a form of Gnostic Judaism or Jewish Gnosticism. I think the first term is a little better; Gnostic Judaism with a proud immoral, intellectualism, characterizing it. The features of it were, remember, a dualism of matter and God. That is that matter is eternal, that matter is also evil, that therefore the created world is evil.

Now, this involved a quite a problem and so Gnostics concerned themselves with the origin of this evil world and how one should account for it. They arrived and they didn't invent this doctrine. They arrived at a doctrine of emanations. That is an angelic being emanated from the being of God. This angelic being that emanated was also called an *aeon*. These emanations or eons were beings that were not from god, but from the Holy God, but the same time a little less holy than god. The second emanation that emanated from the first was a little less holy than the first emanation. And so, the Gnostics posited a series of *aeons* or emanations until finally there emanated a being that was evil enough to responsible for the creation of the world.

Now this being they often in some of the Gnostics teaching identified with the "God of the Old Testament. The "god of the Old Testament" was conceived by the Gnostics to be a god who delighted in evil, and of course, they liked to do the same things that modern theologians do when they make similar statements. These statements incidentally go all the way back to Marcion, one of the early heretics of the second century, who taught that the "god of the Old Testament" was a god of hatred, and a god of warfare, and a god of vindictiveness, and a god of judgment. But the god of the New Testament was a god of love. You have all of that coming from the Protestant pulpits today except that they do not realize, or would not let their audience know the historical origins of that kind of teaching. But at any rate, in the Gnostics they thought of the "god of the Old Testament" as being an evil God, but the "god of the New Testament" was a good god. And by this form of doctrine, these emanations, from the holy God, they were able to harmonize the Old Testament and the New Testament. Incidentally, each of these emanations, or *aeons*, had its own biography according to the Gnostics. And the way of salvation involved the knowledge of the Gnostic doctrine. Hence, to "know" became the characteristic word of the Gnostics; to "know" the truth.

They divided men up into categories of and spiritual; the same types of categories that we have in Christianity. For we have natural men who are not born again. We have spiritual men who are mature born again men. We also have carnal individuals in the Christian faith, too, as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and chapter 3. Well, the Gnostics had all of that and they told people that the way of salvation was through knowledge, and specifically the kind of knowledge that they were purveying. So one, in order to be sure of salvation, must become a Gnostic, imbibe their doctrines, be taught by them, and thus coming to know the saving truth they would have assurance of the possession of salvation.

You can see, of course, that this led to a highly intellectual form of faith which in turn leads to pride and self-satisfaction. The missing ingredient in Gnosticism was, of

course, the fact that their doctrine did not tend to holiness of living. For if it's true that this world is an evil world then one may have one or two responses to it. He may say, "The world is evil, therefore we should be ascetics and withdraw if at all possible from any contact with the world." Now, the optimists and those who have a high-flown view of human nature might expect that something like that could be done. But there are always pessimists. They are potential Calvinists. [Laughter] And these pessimists would believe being more realistic that it would impossible for us to escape from the world. And therefore, "Why not just live as we please." And so the Gnostics generally had two views concerning one's relationship to the world. Either become an ascetic or, on the other hand, become a licentious enjoyer of the sin which we cannot escape from. But you can see that in either case there is no moral result from the teaching of the word of God.

Now the characteristic thing, of course, about Christian is that it provides us with a way of salvation. But that way of salvation leads to a holy life. And in fact, the New Testament insists over and over again that it is fair for us to distinguish genuine Christians from those that are not genuine by the kind of life that they live. "By their fruits ye shall know them," the Lord Jesus said. The apostle said that, "We have been saved by grace through faith for good works which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them."

Now, you can also see from this that the Gnostics had no feeling whatsoever for the cross of Jesus Christ. Occasionally you might find some Gnostics who had been exposed to Christianity who sought to weave into their system something concerning the cross of Christ. But the great body of Gnostic teaching had no place in it for the cross of Jesus Christ.

Oswald Chambers said many years ago a very interesting and yet a very true statement. He said, "All heaven is interested in the cross of Christ. All hell is terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore it." And the Gnostics

were human beings who had not been enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God and they sought and did succeed in largely ignoring it.

Today my granddaughter was playing in Dallas with a friend. And in the course of their play she drew some pictures of Christ dying on the cross and of an open tomb for her drawing. And a friend's mother happened to come in the room, looked at the pictures and says, "Let's not draw such unhappy things. Let's draw happy things." And Debby thought that was right happy. [Laughter] A cross and an open tomb. What could be happier than that? But the world seeks if at all possible to ignore the cross of Jesus Christ.

Well, let's look at the opening charge to Timothy in this section in which the apostle warns about heresy in doctrine and in life. Verse 3 and verse 4. Now, remember that 1 Timothy is written after Paul has left Ephesus. And it is written back to Timothy in order that Timothy, who was a young man, might have apostolic support for the work of charging some that they teach no other doctrine. It was very helpful, I'm sure, for Timothy, the apostle's representative, to be able to say, "The Apostle Paul has written me and he has told me to warn you against those who are teaching false doctrine." He was a young man and it would be very easy for an elderly Christian to come up and say to him, "Well, you're a young man and you don't really understand Christianity yet. And so you should keep more quiet in the matters that concern the church." But the apostle's representative was able to pull out this scroll from the Apostle Paul and say, "Look, this is what the Apostle Paul has said and he has told me to do this. An apostolic authority stands behind it."

Now, the first thing that he tells Timothy to do is that he should charge some that they teach no other doctrine. That word that is translated, "Teach no other doctrine," is a word that really means to literally "to teach heterodoxy". "When I went to Macedonia that thou mightest charge some that they do not teach heterodoxy." That is false doctrine. Now, that thing that the apostle has in mind is the teaching of novelties; different

teaching. Do not teach different teaching. Now, that's a very instructive word and I think that is very important for us as Christians. It is erroneous new teaching that the apostle has in mind. The reason that this is important is because so often in evangelical circles men think because they have been taught, and rightly, that the Holy Spirit is the authoritative teacher of doctrine that they have the right to launch out into new doctrines on the authority simply of their own illumination from the Holy Spirit; contrary to the great teaching of the church down through the centuries.

Now, I would like if I possible could to get you to think otherwise. Now there are sometimes when it necessary for a person, if one can show that the classic teaching on a subject is wrong, it is necessary for a person at times to teach doctrine that is new. But after all, the Christian has been in existence nineteen hundred years and the chances of any one of us being able to teach some new doctrine after nineteen hundred years of study of the word of God under the teaching of Holy Spirit is very slim. Now you should remember this also, that every doctrine of the Christian faith has a history of interpretation behind it. In other words, all of these doctrines that we believe; justification by faith, the forgiveness of sins through faith, the doctrine of the deity of Christ, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, the doctrine of irresistible grace, the doctrine of the antichrist, the doctrine of the future things in general, all of these things have been the subject of a great deal of study and teaching down through the years. The Holy Spirit has not been keeping quiet in his teaching ministry. He has been very active. And many godly men have studied very intently and intensively the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, built up around all of the great doctrines is a history of the viewpoints that men have had concerning them.

I suggest to you if you have never done this that you buy yourself a good book of the history of Christian doctrine. For example, Eutyches' two volumes of *The History of Christian Doctrine* would be two good books for every Christian read. He's a Lutheran, but still they would be two good books for every one of you to read so that you would



get the since of the fact that we as Christians living in 1976 are part of a great movement of God down through the centuries. Oh certainly we may have some things by which we differ from the mainstream of Christianity, but the vast number of biblical doctrines are doctrines which most of the orthodox have held down through the centuries.

So when Paul tells Timothy here that he is to charge men that they should teach no novel teachings he is beginning a long line of teaching which is something that should concern us today. If a person is always coming up with some new teaching, some different teaching which is contrary to what the Holy Spirit has taught the vast majority of Christians down through the years, something is wrong. Either he is a special person who, contrary to Martin Luther, or Augustine or some of the other great men of the faith, he stands head and shoulders above them or else the Holy Spirit has been a laggard about teaching the word of God down through the centuries. And yet he has said, the Lord Jesus, that the spirit would lead us, guide us, in all the truth. So novel teaching; that is something we should avoid. One should never go for novel teaching without the most serious study of that particular teaching.

This past weekend I was in Canada for a weekend of meetings on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. And I had some interesting conversations in the home in which I was staying. This man is a rather well to do man and he has been an elder in a local church and a rather prominent man in a certain number of churches within the Christian faith. They were noted for their exclusiveness and he was a member of them for many years. He was a very knowledgeable man. The house was filled with guests. It was a large house, but nevertheless there were about eight or ten people staying in the house. And so we had some lengthy sessions in which we discussed the things that concern the word of God, and they were some good sessions. And some of them had to do with the exclusiveness of some of the Christians that make up certain meetings.

And one thing that was interesting was that he had been a member of what was called the Kelly Lowe Continental Brethren. Now the Kelly Lowe Continental Brethren

were some believers who were followers of William Kelly, who incidentally was an excellent Bible teacher, but he had gone on and they had gone beyond William Kelly. [Laughter] and another man by the name of Lowe had been very prominent in the meeting. And the Continental is there because they were rather strong in the southern part of Europe, German, and Switzerland, Austria; down through there. So they have come to be known as the Kelly Lowe Continental Brethren. They are very exclusive brethren. S.L. Johnson Jr. could not partake of the Lord's Supper in their meetings at all. The reason being that I fellowship with you people in Believers Chapel and you are not exclusive enough, you are not right enough in the truth. And so if I came I their meetings they would say, "We're sorry, Brother Johnson. You will have to sit on the back row and not partake of the elements when they are passed." They're very exclusive brethren. Now, in an exclusive organization like this there tends to development one man, sometimes two or three men, who have the power of hope in their midst. And while it is all very unofficial, the rules go out from these individuals that certain truths are to be proclaimed and made the test of fellowship.

And what was interesting to me was my good friend, Dick Heyho [phonetic spelling] was speaking about the fact that at one time the word had come down that a new line of teaching was to be proclaimed. And if the teachers did not proclaim the new line of teaching they were disbarred from fellowship. Now, you couldn't escape by saying nothing about it. You had to be positive. If you said anything you anything you had to speak about this new teaching. Now, the new teaching I needn't go into because it didn't really mean a whole lot. But it illustrates the fact that there is a tendency in our nature to develop novelties; new teachings, breakthroughs if you will, in which we claim that we have some unusual teaching which other Christians have not had. We ought to beware of that kind of thing.

Now, some of you may have even heard of the Taylor Brethren. Now, the Taylor Brethren are brethren. They are still very prominent in Britain. They were on the front

pages of the newspaper of the London Times mind you not too many years ago. The Taylor Brethren has as their pope Big Jim Taylor. Now, Big Jim has gone on and Little Jim is now the pope of that particular group. And in the Taylor Brethren they have their own little line of teaching, too. And one must adhere to that or else one is out.

So these things that the apostle is speaking about when he says, "Now, Timothy I want you to charge them that they teach no new doctrine; no novelties, no heterodox doctrine. They have very practical application to the things that have to do with a local church such as this. We ought to examine all new teachings very carefully to see that they do square with Scripture.

Now, having said all of that we need to say the other thing too, that there have been times in the history of the Christian church in which some great doctrine has come to light with a new freshness and a new significance. I think the reformation was a day such as that. Augustine's rediscovery of the doctrine of grace, which had been largely lost by the fourth century, was still another of true breakthrough. But what Timothy is saying is that we should avoid the novelties of the teaching of Holy Scripture. That's a very good warning and I do hope that you as Christians will avoid the novelties. And if you're a teacher of the word do not say, "All the teachers of the word say this, but I say this," assuming the language of our Lord Jesus without the most careful consideration of what you are saying.

Now, he goes on to say, "That though mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies." This is a more specific definition of the heterodox teaching that the apostle was talking about in his situation. Does he have reference to the elaborate myths by which the Gnostics sought to solve the problem of evil? Those things that I referred to in the introduction? Their ideas about the evil of matter, and the nature of God, and how one find salvation through knowledge? Is that what he means when he says, "Neither give heed to fables or myths." Or does he have in mind the allegorical interpretation of Old Testament genealogies?

It was the custom among the Jewish interpreters of Scripture to seek to find some allegorical significance in the names of the genealogies of the Old Testament books which contain these genealogies. And they studied them studying every word. And then out of their own imagination they would construct an entire biography for some unknown character whose name appeared in the genealogies, whether of the Book of Genesis or of the Book of Chronicles. And this particular thing was a kind of activity which the rabbinic teachers, the Jewish teachers, engaged in constantly. Is that what the apostle has in mind for he talks about endless genealogies. The chances are, and this is a guess. I'm not seeking to introduce some new teaching, this is a guess. The chances are, and incidentally most of the commentators agree, that the apostle has in mind both of these things and that in the historical situation to how he addresses himself there were those who had mingled these Gnostic elements with the Jewish elements. And that accounts for the expression fables and endless genealogies. These terms then have historical significance. I do not think that we have anything that really corresponds to this in the teaching of the word of God today. But then, I don't know what everybody is saying about the Bible. It's just possible that we do have something similar to this today. We certainly have a lot of mythical teaching that is going on, but not this particular kind.

The apostle speaks further about what these things do. He says, "They minister questions." Now, that word, "questions" here probably means something like "speculations". They minister speculations. Incidentally, the apostle does not mean here that we are not to reflect on our faith when he says, "I don't want you to give heed to fable and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith. He doesn't mean at all that we should not reflect upon our faith. He condemns the pseudo-problems of these heretical exegeses. So what he is saying is, "Do not pay any attention to these heretics, exegeses of Scripture, and the myths and endless genealogies with which they concern themselves. He doesn't at all mean that we are not to reflect on our faith, that we are not to know the reasonable basis for it and to be able

to contend for the faith with the world. That is of great importance for us as Christians and particularly in this day when we are called upon as Christians to contend for your faith with the scientist who have a tremendous faith themselves but don't realize it, and the philosophers who also rest their case upon faith though they don't realize it, and also the historians, and the psychologists and others.

Every philosophy rests upon a faith basis. All thinking rests upon faith. And it the responsibility of every Christian to know exactly why the competing philosophies do rest on faith and why his Christian philosophy, while it rests on faith, rests upon a sounder basis than theirs. Now, this is part of being a Christian. And one of the things that I do hope that in Believers Chapel, I speak to those of you who attend Believers Chapel, one of the things that I hope that over the next few years we come to grasp and make part of our own thinking is the intellectual basis of the Christian faith to which we hold so that we are able to defend this faith in the marketplace of ideas which is about us.

Now Paul then, when he says that these things minister questions, does not deny this right and duty to reflect on our faith. He's talking about the false problems of these heretics and their misuse of Scripture. There are things that minister speculations rather than godly edifying, which is in faith. Now translating it down to our present day, the apostle would be talking about Christian Science for example. He would be talking about the Adventists, for example. He would be talking about Armstrongism. Whether Herbert's brand or Garnet Ted's brand; Armstrongism. The pseudol problems that arise from false exegeses of the word of God.

I must make a confession to you. I was taken in on Monday. Coming back on the airplane from Canada we came down to Dallas, Texas, took a look at the airport, decided that it was not a wise thing to land in the midst of tornadoes, and turned around and then went back north of the border again to Oklahoma where they don't have tornados. [Laughter] And there we sat in the airport for a couple of hours. And finally,

we got back down to Dallas three or four hours later. I guess everybody on the plane was a little upset.

They put us on another plane. I walked in on the plane and there sitting on one of the seats at the back was C.S. Lewis's Mere Christianity. And as I walked down the aisle one of the hostesses looked at me, and smiled, and said, "You're Dr. Johnson, aren't you?" And I said, "You're right." [Laughter] "I am." And we had a nice letter conversation. And this young stewardess has attended Believers Chapel.

But when I got into the airport I discovered that my bag was back up in the north country. I don't leave anything in Yankee country, of course. And so I was a little upset and I was walking down the Braniff section of the new airport and those little girls selling flowers. And I thought, "Well, she wants a little money and she probably is representing some justifiable charity." And so I went over, took out my money and gave it to her before I asked her what she stood for. And she all ready had my dollar. [Laughter] In fact, I had two dollars in my hand to tell you the truth. And I still had one in my hand and she said, "We're representing Hare Krishna." I took that dollar back. That was the only one I could get back. [Laughter] And I contributed a dollar to the Hare Krishnas. Well I thought, "I've just got to get my dollars worth out of this." [Laughter] And so we engaged in a little bit of theological disputation there. [Laughter] And I sought to lead her into the truth of Ephesians 2:8 and 9, but I'm afraid that she was really blind. A nice little girl, but she kept repeating to me when I asked her, "What must we do to be saved?" "We must follow the instructions of Jesus." And the instructions of Jesus were for her good works.

Now, I would assume that the apostle would be talking about that also. The instructions of Jesus, incidentally, are very plain. The son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. Those are the instructions of Jesus. But unfortunately, when people are blind they pick here and there the instruction so of Jesus that tend to make it necessary for us to do good works in order

to be saved, and by pass all of those statements of our Lord which imply that we cannot save ourselves by good works but have to be saved through faith. So I hope you'll pray for that little girl. She at least has heard Ephesians 2:8 and 9 expounded for five or ten minutes because I really wanted to get my dollar's worth. [Laughter] I really hated to think that I had been taken in by a little girl and on top of that Harry Krishna, too. [Laughter] Such are the problems of life.

Now, then the apostle said that these "ministered questions rather than godly edifying." If you have the Authorized Version you have the form "godly edifying". But in the Greek txt the most acceptable reading is a word that means something like "dispensation". It really is the word for dispensation, a "godly dispensation in faith". Now, the difference in these two words is very small. For example, the word for "edifying" is the Greek word *oikodomeon* in this context. And the word for "dispensation" is *oikonomian*. *Oikonomian* and *oikodomeon*, and you can see that it would be very easy for a scribe in copying a manuscript such as this to make a mistake. And in our Authorized Version the translators translated a manuscript or manuscripts that had the rendering "edifying". But the better reading, I think is the word "dispensation". Or I'm going to suggest another rendering for it. "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions rather than God's saving plan in faith." "God's saving plan in faith," dispensation.

This word "dispensation" connotes in Greek the management of a household. For example, if you have household in which the manager of the household is a very neat housekeeper, such as I do, you could say that the dispensation at our house is characterized by neatness. That's the management of a household. Now, if it's not you can make some other remarks. But that *oikonomian* is a word that means "dispensation" in the sense of the management of a household.

Now, it also then could mean two things. it could mean God's redemptive purpose in history, for that is the management of his household; his world. That's his

dispensation; what he is doing throughout history. In other words, the whole story of the Bible as it reflects the story of God's work in history; that's God's dispensation which is in faith. Or it could refer to the stewardship that is given to men to secure God's redemptive purpose in history. It could be one or the other. In other words, it could refer to what God is doing or it could refer to a steward ship, a trust of this work to men in order that through their preaching and teaching God's overall program may be accomplished.

Now, personally I like the first. And therefore, that's why I rendered it "God's saving plan". "False doctrine tends to minister questions rather than God's saving plan, which is in faith." Now, the reason I like that better is because it's a better contrast to the fancies, or the myths and genealogies, of the false teachers. And so over against the myths and endless genealogies of the false teachers we have "God's saving plan" which is the work or the revelation of the word of God. And incidentally, well you notice that this is a saving plan which is in faith. So the first principle of the Christian faith is that we have a revelation from God in the Holy Scriptures. And this revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures is designed for men who have faith. Now, that characterizes the truth of God. It is a revelation from God and it is contained in Holy Scripture. This is our presupposition as Christians and that is the basis of the Christian faith.

And so the apostle says, "God's plan of salvation should be the product of true teaching." Well having said that now, having told Timothy what his charge is, he expresses the aim of it in the fifth verse. He says, "Now, the end of the commandment," and here he refers to the end of the charge that the has given Timothy and that Timothy is to give. Commandment and charge are the same word in the Greek text. That is, the root is the same. So what he is saying, "Now, the end of the charge is love." What does that mean? Well, that means that the goal of what God is doing is love. So you see, what he is telling Timothy is that the charge is not only negative, that is to charge men that they do not teach new novel doctrines, but it's positive. It should lead to Christian love.



Now I use the adjective Christian because as you well know, you've heard me enough to know that I do not think that most of that that is meant by most people when they say love is Christian love. Often is simply sentimentality. It is sweetness, but it is not Christian love. Christian love is love that is grounded in God's holiness and it is not true Christian love unless it is grounded in holiness. So it is foolish for us to speak about love in the sense of sentimentality. When I think of love without thinking of the Scriptural love I often think that which the pop singers sing. And I want to tend to pronounce it "Love." [Laughter] Because that's the kind of love that it is.

Now, Christian love is something entirely different. It is the movement out from the heart of God or from the child of God toward the object in a sacrificial way for the good of that person, and it is grounded in holiness. That means that it is often love for us to rebuke and to be rebuked. And so when we are rebuked by the brethren we should remember that it may be well be that that rebuke is done in love. And you who have ever had children know how true that it. A parent who does not rebuke his or her children is not a good parent. And the sentimentalities are of no benefit in the raising of our children.

And God, as I've often said, God is a holy God. And when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior you came into the family of a God who really cares and he cares enough to discipline. And so if you have to pass through some things that are very pleasant you should remember that your God is a sovereign God and you pass through things that are often for your good even though they're not pleasant at all. And the disciplines of life are some of the best things that ever happen to us. And we should never forget that those disciplines of life are designed not simply for this life, but for the life that is to come.

So Paul says, "The end (the goal) of the commandment is love (Christian love). Now, I think he probably could have expanded this and said Christian love, not the knowledge of the Gnostics; love. But I'm always tempted to avoid saying something like

that because you may go out and say, "Dr. Johnson finally said it. He finally said love is more important than doctrine." I would never say it. So I tend to want to avoid that since I could be so misunderstood. But nevertheless, it is true. So I say it in this context that all true biblical doctrine should lead to genuine Christian love. Now, that's what Paul means. So the emphasis is on the doctrine that issues in Christian love; the sacrificial kind of love of which the greatest illustration is "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ." That's the great illustration of love.

The pastorals stress right doctrine and right doing. And we'll see that this thought comes out constantly here. Well, now he says, "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart." In other words, what the Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," the apostle says, "Out of the pure heart there comes the love that is Christian love," and it comes out of a good conscience also. The good conscience is the kind of conscience that is able to examine one's life without feeling guilty. That's a good conscience. We'll talk about conscience later because that's a word of the pastorals. "And faith unfeigned (unhypocritical faith)." The faith that works through love. So, "Timothy, I'm give you this charge not simply that you shall slay the false teachers but that out of your exhortation and charges there should come true Christian love, which incidentally can only come through of course good teaching of the word of God."

And finally, Paul speaks in verse 6 and 7 of the cause of the false teachers failure and he really hits them hard. He says, "From which some having swerved." The word literally means "missed the mark". It's not the word for sin. It's *ostoketo* and *ostokas* was a mark. So to miss the mark means to fail. These false teachers have failed. "Having swerved, have turned aside to vain jangling." Now, vain jangling has been translated "futile verbiage" by some. You'll notice the apostle, as you read through 1 Timothy and in fact the pastorals, he's speak more than once about the futile wordy type of false teaching which his readers are exposed to. And this, incidentally, is characteristic of most false teaching. It's very difficult to really get a handle on.

Now, I often have students read certain liberal theological works for various purposes. And almost always they'll be a number of them come back to me and ask me a question something like this; and those that don't come are probably a little too embarrassed to do it. They think they ought to understand, and they're not understanding and they don't want to reveal the fact that they are not getting it. But some are less reticent and they come and say, "I've read through this but I cannot understand what he is talking about." Now, this is characteristic of almost all modern theology.

Now if you read, for example, the works of men like Urgan Moteman who is very popular today as a theologian of revolution. I guarantee you, unless you're a Marxist and you can recognize some familiar phrases here and there in his theology of hope, you will be almost totally confused. You will not know exactly what he is trying to say. If you read Wolfhart Pannenberg's works you may understand it a little more than you do Moteman's, but I guarantee you you will not understand their writing. You will have to read it over and over and over again. One characteristic of liberal theology is its empty speak, its futile verbiage. They are words but they do not have a great deal of substance. And the reason is because they don't have much substance. So the apostle says these false teachers tend to vein jangling.

And finally he says, "Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they nor that about which they affirm." In other words, "They don't know their subject," Paul says. These are men who are modern theologians in Paul's day and he says, "They want to be teachers of the law, but they don't understand what they're talking about." That's exactly what he's saying. You thought I was mean to be saying that about those men. I'm just following Paul. "They don't know what they're talking about," and then the apostle says something that's even worse, "nor that about which the affirm. And incidentally, that word means to confidently affirm. It's an intensive word in the Greek text. It's bad enough not to know your subject, but worse when you confidently affirm your ignorance. [Laughter] If you taught it and said, "I think this is what it is," that would

be bad enough if it were wrong. But if you said, "Now, this is it," and you're wrong; you're more ridiculous than before.

Well, that's what the apostle is saying. Now, let me close with a few remarks concerning what we learn about a heretic here and what we learn about a Christian thinker. Now, you can tell as you read through these verses that there are certain things that characterize a heretic. Now, some of these things may characterize an orthodox man, too, at certain points. But they characterize heretics and they should be guards and warnings, admonitions, for us. First of all, they are driven by a desire for novelty. That's characteristic of a false teacher. They are driven by a desire for novelty. Now, I don't have time to speak about 2 John verse 9, but it would be good for you to put that text in your notes, and look it up and study it in the light of this.

Another thing that characterizes the false teacher is that he exalts the mind at the expense of the spirit. His teaching is often purely intellectual. His teaching is not teaching that comprehends the intellect; the will, the emotions. But the intellect is exalted at the expense of the spirit or the heart we might say.

A third thing that characterizes him is that he frequently is interested much more in argument than he is in action. He's not nearly so much interested in the application of the truth as he is in arguing over its details. Now, a lot of Christians can easily fall into that trap; and even some Calvinists. [Laughter] They can fall into it, too. They can get so concerned over the truth that they do hold, which may be truth. In my opinion is truth. But nevertheless, they can so teach it, so proclaim it, so spread it that the result is there is a stress on argument instead of practical application. There is also characteristic an arrogance instead of humility. Some of these speak to me. In fact, all of them do to tell you the truth.

And a fifth thing that characterizes the mind of the heretic is the fact that he is often dogmatic about his ignorance. Now, I think that one characteristic illustration of this for me was George Buttrecht's diatribe against the inspiration of the Holy Scripture, which

I have spoken to you about. I won't go into it again. There are people today who are engaged in strong diatribes concerning the Greek text of the New Testament who do not understand what they are talking about at all. They are Christians, but some the characteristics of the mind of the heretics are theirs.

Now, what is the mind of a Christian thinker? Well, characteristic of him is the fact that his teaching is a teaching that rests upon divine revelation received through faith; faith. Characteristic of the Christian thinker is the teaching is to have its end in Christian love. His truth that he proclaims he seeks to proclaim, thirdly, is from a pure heart and a good conscience. That's important. This is the mind of the Christian thinker as over against the mind of the heretic. These words of the Apostle Paul are very instructive for us, and I think it would be well for us to ponder them with a great deal of meditation and guard ourselves by the help of the spirit from error both in doctrine and in life. Time is up. We close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words from the Apostle Paul. And we do ask, Oh God, that Thou wilt give us as Christian believers the desire to know the Scriptures but also the desire to by Thy grace know the experience of Christian love.

May Lord, Thy blessing attend the study and the work of every believer here. And if there should be someone here who has not yet come to Christ in faith give them no rest nor peace until they recognize that they are lost.

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]