

## INTRODUCTION

We believe that there is one God only, who created everything else, who made the world in six days, just as the Bible says.

We believe that according to His perfect understanding of right and wrong, He has written His moral law into our very nature, so that we inherently know what is right and what is wrong.

We believe that God's moral law was further revealed in the Ten Commandments, which God spoke with His own voice and wrote in stone with His own finger.

We believe that beginning with the first man, Adam, all of us have broken God's perfect law in many ways, have transgressed that law, have done what it forbids, and have failed to do what it prohibits; we have acted in love for ourselves only, and in hatred for God and for our neighbors.

We believe that in doing so, we all have made ourselves deserving of punishment from God, which punishment consists of a "second death," where sinners will suffer in a lake of fire forever, along with the devil and his demons.

We believe that God has sent His own Son, who took on our human nature, as the man Jesus of Nazareth. We believe He always obeyed God's law, loving both God and His neighbor perfectly. We believe Jesus died on the cross, crucified as if He were a criminal. We believe He lived that righteous life, and died that bloody death, to save sinners from the wrath of God to come. We believe that all who repent of their sins, turning from them to serve God as disciples of Jesus Christ, are forgiven their sins. We believe that Jesus Christ gives everlasting life instead of everlasting death to all who trust in Him.

These things, along with everything else that the Bible says, we have to say to anyone who will listen. We who are pastors preach and teach them as the duty of our office. But every Christian wants to teach such things to other people, whether those in the church or those outside.

Yet we know that people do not always want to listen to what they need to hear. The Bible tells us that when we speak the word of truth, people might despise us because we are young, or for some other reason.

But we know that people need to heed God's law and gospel, in order to have true joy during this life, in order to be saved from God's wrath on the day of judgment, and in order to enjoy eternal life with Him.

So, we want to convince people that they should listen! And, indeed, the Bible says that there is a way to help people who at first would be inclined to despise you when you speak about the spiritual things of God.

**To convince people that they ought to listen to the truth that you have to say to them about the spiritual things of God, be an example in faith.**

TEXT

1 Timothy 4:11-12

BODY

**To convince people that they ought to listen to the truth that you have to say to them about the spiritual things of God, be an example in faith.**

- I. To Be An Example in Faith, Make Sure You Understand What Faith Is
  - A. By its object: Jesus Christ
    1. It is popular for politicians, entertainers, and others to say they have faith, or that their faith is important to them, or that you have to have faith.
    2. But in most of these cases, the person means faith that is misplaced
      - a) faith in yourself
      - b) faith in the goodness of human nature
      - c) faith in your family or community
    3. when the Bible says to be an example in faith, it means faith with Jesus Christ the Son of God as its object
      - a) John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
      - b) John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.
  - B. By several words that mean the same thing:
    1. believing in Jesus
    2. having confidence in Jesus
    3. depending on Jesus
    4. relying on Jesus
  - C. By the best attempts to define it in confessions of faith
    1. 1560s Belgic Confession
      - a) embracing Jesus Christ with all his merits,
      - b) making him your own,
      - c) and no longer looking for anything apart from him
    2. 1925 BFM:
      - a) being deeply convinced of the way of salvation by Christ,
      - b) heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King,
      - c) and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.
    3. 1689 & Westminster: accepting, receiving, and resting upon him [Christ] alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life

D. By its relationship with good works

1. faith is the opposite of good works: you don't think to be accepted with God on the basis of your good works, but on the basis of the good works of Jesus Christ
2. faith is accompanied by good works: if a person truly has faith in Jesus Christ, as a result he truly does the good works of Jesus Christ

E. By comparison with some things recorded in the Bible; faith is like:

1. being one of the people who saw Jesus when He was here on earth
  - a) the blind men crying out for Jesus to be merciful to them and give them their sight
  - b) the chronically sick woman touching the hem of Jesus' garment
  - c) the four friends bringing the paralyzed man to set him before Jesus
  - d) Martha sitting at Jesus' feet listening to His words
2. being Israel in the wilderness
  - a) being hungry and eating manna, Jesus Christ being the manna from heaven
  - b) being thirsty and drinking water from the rock, Jesus Christ being the rock that gives the water
  - c) being poisoned by snake bite, and looking for healing to the bronze snake that God told Moses to set up, Jesus Christ crucified being that bronze snake
3. being a sheep and
  - a) following Jesus as your shepherd
  - b) coming into the sheep pen, through Jesus as the door

To be an example in faith, make sure you understand what faith is; and

- II. To Be An Example in Faith, Remember How Central Faith Is
- A. Faith, together with repentance, is the most central matter of true religion, or biblical Christianity
  - B. I'm going to refer to some things in Acts 20 for help on this.
    - 1. remember 1 Timothy was written by Paul to Timothy when he was ministering in the church at the big city of Ephesus
    - 2. Acts 20 records what Paul said to the elders in that church at Ephesus not very long before that
  - C. Acts 20:20-21 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, (21) testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and **faith** toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
    - 1. When Paul summarized what he had taught in Ephesus, when he had preached there for two years (Acts 19:10), he summed it all up in two points
      - a) repentance toward God
      - b) **faith** toward our Lord Jesus Christ
  - D. See a similar summary 1 Timothy 1:18-19a This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (19) having **faith** and a good conscience...
    - 1. **faith**
    - 2. a good conscience
      - a) a man has recongized the sinfulness of his former conduct
      - b) he has repented, and continues repentant
      - c) he resists doing anything wicked, striving to do only what is good
      - d) when he does sin, he repents and continues to strive for holiness
      - e) this is what it means to have a good consience
  - E. Faith, always together with repentance or keeping a good conscience, is the central matter of true religion

To be an example in faith,  
-make sure you understand what faith is  
-remember how central faith is; and

- III. To Be An Example in Faith, Consider the Danger People Face Related to Faith
- A. Acts 20:28-30 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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. (29) For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. (30) Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.
  - B. 1 Timothy 1:18-20 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (19) having **faith** and a good conscience, which some having rejected, **concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck**, (20) of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.
  - C. 1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times **some will depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,
  - D. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. (10) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which **some have strayed from the faith in their greediness**, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
  - E. 1 Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge-- (21) by professing it **some have strayed concerning the faith.** Grace be with you. Amen.
    - 1. GEN, KJV: science falsely so called

To be an example in faith,

-make sure you understand what faith is

-remember how central faith is

-consider the danger people face regarding faith

- IV. Recognize Our Lord's Appointed Means for Saving Souls From This Danger
- A. Especially the church's pastors, but more generally every Christian
  - B. We speak the truth to people
    - 1. about God's law
      - a) what truly is right and wrong, and that it cannot be changed by man
      - b) that people are sinners, breakers of God's law, in danger of the wrath of God to come
    - 2. about the gospel, the good news
      - a) that Jesus Christ has died on the cross in the place of sinners
      - b) that He is risen from the dead
      - c) that God forgives all who repent and trust in Jesus
  - C. But when we speak to people, telling them the truth about the things of God, they might despise us and not listen
  - D. If we seem to waver in faith, their doubts about the value of our words will seem to be confirmed
  - E. But if we remain sound in faith, holding firmly to faith, maintaining the pattern of sound words laid down by the Lord's apostles, sticking to what we believe, continuing to trust Jesus Christ, no matter what happens, God may be pleased to change their minds about His law and His gospel, when they observe how firmly committed we are to the truth of it
  - F. And so, strange as this sounds, by our words and by our being an example of faith, God will save both us and those who hear us, using both our words and our example as tools or instruments in His hands

## CONCLUSION

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times **some will depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

But when people around you are tempted by such deceivers, your example of strong, steady faith in Jesus Christ may be used by the Lord to save them!

1 Timothy 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. (10) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which **some have strayed from the faith in their greediness**, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

But when people around you are tempted by the desire to get rich, your example of strong, steady faith in Jesus Christ may be used by the Lord to save them!

1 Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge-- (21) by professing it **some have strayed concerning the faith**.

But when people around you are tempted by such pseudo-science, your example of strong, steady faith in Jesus Christ may be used by the Lord to save them!

Therefore, speak the truth to people, as you have opportunity, and as is appropriate to each one of you according to your station in life. And, that those who hear you may be convinced to listen, be an example in faith.

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 168 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Rita - Trinity 765 "My Heart Is Firmly Fixed"

Rita - Trinity 362 "Let Thy Blood In Mercy Poured"

Thad - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 108:1-5

Alex - Scripture Reading - Genesis 15:1-6

~~Stephen~~ Jeff - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Psalm 108:12-13

in faith rather than in works  
in true, living faith rather than feigned, dead faith

Poole:

in a steady confession and profession of the doctrine of the gospel

Bengel:

Faith, considered apart from its office in justification, enters often into the middle of an enumeration of this kind, and denotes sincerity of the mind trusting in God, in prosperity and adversity

Gill:

in the exercise of the grace of faith; in holding fast the profession of faith; and in retaining the doctrine of faith, with all integrity, faithfulness, and constancy, standing fast in it, striving and contending for it.

Clarke (as Wesley):

This word πιστις is probably taken here for fidelity

Barnes:

At all times, and in all trials show to believers by your example, how they ought to maintain unshaken confidence in God.

## THE PROBLEM OR THREAT

Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

Acts 20:20-21 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, (21) testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and **faith** toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:28-30 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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. (29) For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. (30) Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

1 Timothy 1:18-20 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (19) having **faith** and a good conscience, which some having rejected, **concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck**, (20) of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times **some will depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

But when such deceivers try to get the ear of the members of the congregation, your example in faith will save them. Your example is strong, steady faith in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. (10) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which **some have strayed from the faith in their greediness**, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

But when members of the congregation are tempted by the desire to get rich, your example in faith will save them. Your example is strong, steady faith in Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge-- (21) by professing it **some have strayed concerning the faith**. Grace be with you. Amen.

GEN, KJV: science falsely so called

2 Timothy 2:16-18 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. (17) And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, (18) who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and **they overthrow the faith** of some.

ESV: like gangrene