

The Minister's Mission, p.2

By Jeff Noblit

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Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Grab your Bibles and to to 1 Timothy and we'll pick up where we left off in the earlier service today. The Apostle Paul is writing this epistle to the young Timothy, his young understudy minister. He's left him behind in Ephesus to oversee the church and to straighten out some things in the church there at Ephesus, and as I've said before, it seems that the Apostle Paul goes to these cities, he preaches the word of God and folks are saved, he begins a congregation, of course, they're new, they're baby Christians, and he doesn't no more get out the door to go further and go to other places to preach and win souls, than heresy and false teaching and compromised doctrine, in this case to Timothy, he calls them strange doctrines come into the church, and so he's gonna get Timothy on that right away.

1 Timothy 1, beginning in verse 3, he says,

3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct [or charge or command or order] certain men not to teach strange doctrines, 4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration [or the dispensation] of God which is by faith. 5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussions,

Now, I'm sorry. Verse 7.

7 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.

Now I don't plan on being long tonight. This is a special day so we'll try to get out a little early because we're having a party at my house for my birthday. You thought it was gonna be something else, didn't you? I'm more important than anything else out there to my family. I hope I am.

We talked about the minister's mission, that's what I've entitled this exposition, and first of all, as he says, "I left you behind as I went to Macedonia in Ephesus," he's talking about, "I left you behind, Timothy, to be about overseeing, pastoring the local church there in Ephesus." And we talked about I. being local church centered, and we want that to be a a a understood settled conclusion. As I've said before, if you look at the Apostle Paul's ministry and any of the other apostles and in the whole canon of the New Testament, you just see no other ministry. That's what it is, preaching the word, winning the lost, organizing them into local churches and building them up and going and doing it somewhere else, and that's what we're committed to, and that's what Anchored in Truth missions is all about. Again, I'd like to say, I'm not saying other things are wrong but that is the centrality of God's work. Other ministries will go and come and come and go, but God's church will be here for time and for eternity. He's even gonna go to the trouble of glorifying it one day so it can be with him for all eternity.

We talked about the fact that in the inauguration of his ministry, he was about his church, "Upon this rock I will build My church," he says, and then at the culmination of his work, that's the cross, the high point. The Bible says in Ephesians 5:25, he died for his bride, the church. Then eventually one day in the future at the coronation of his work when he's glorified and unveiled before us, he will glorify his bride, the church. It's all about the church and we ought to be all about the church.

Let me say this very clearly to you because it's interesting to me that there's so much and, again, discernment is the key word. Now again, there are good brothers and sisters who maybe are just immature or not taught well, and then there are some folks who are just out and out satanic false teachers. So we've got to be loving and patient with folks and bring them along to understand just like we have to grow to understand some things, but it is frustrating how many people talk about Jesus, say they love Jesus, they like Jesus, but it's a Jesus of their subjective understanding, not the Jesus as he's revealed in Scripture, and one of the things about loving Jesus is, if you really love Jesus, you love what Jesus loves. I mean, you can't you can't love somebody and not love what they love. Well, I guess you can in a way but in the way we're supposed to love Jesus and that is to be devoted to him and be about his cause and his mission in the world, we have to love what he loves. So what does he love? He loves the church. He loves everything about the church. He loves the people he's saved to put in his church. He loves how he saves them. He loves how he's sanctifying them and growing them. He loves how he's organized them to function. He loves how he's put elders to oversee, teach, lead, protect them, and feed them. He loves how he gives deacons to serve and minister in the body. He loves how he's spread out the spiritual gifts among all of us so we'd all be caring for, ministering, encouraging, exhorting, reproving, rebuking, building up, helping each other. He loves everything about the church. He loves how he gave the church the principles of accountability and discipline if somebody refuses to repent within the church. He loves the church. He loves everything about the church. He's just all about the church.

So we need to be, like the Apostle Paul and like Jesus, we need to love what they loved and they loved the church. I'm telling ya, I can't I just can't tell you how much as I've pastored through these years and God's grown me and humbled me and made me repent

over and over again, but how much in this growth process I have grown in my great deep passion for the wisdom of God in the church. It's a wonderful thing.

Now, II. in review, we talked about the fact as Paul is sending, or not sending, he's leaving Timothy behind in Ephesus, he says, "I'm gonna leave you there so that," verse 3, "that you'll remain on in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines." So that unrelenting battle to guard or preserve sound doctrine in the church. It just never ends and that's one of the difficult and exhausting thing things about pastoral ministry as there's always more to do. I never take a day off, I never take a time away, I never take a break when I don't carry with me, "Yeah, but this needs to be done and that needs to be addressed and that needs to be spoken about and that needs to be corrected, this needs to be built up." It just never ends. If you didn't throw yourself in the sovereignty of God and say, "I've got my course to march and I've got my course to fulfill and it's not gonna be perfect when I get through but I ought to do the best I can," that I think you'd go crazy because it is an unrelenting battle and we went through all the verses how he told Timothy over and over and Titus and in general all ministers, to stay at it, be unrelenting, keep on keeping on, reprove, rebuke, correct and be a a a warrior to guard and preserve sound doctrine.

I brought out an interesting side note from Jeremiah 2:19. Remember that this morning? "Your apostasies will reprove you." And I talked about how we've let strange doctrines into evangelical and Baptist life and it's changed how we do things and how we view things and it's causing some really a a I think if even blasphemous ah things that dishonor the Lord, things that ah discredit the message, things that are a dis-service to the hearers within our churches and it's because we've embraced strange teachings about what we're supposed to do and how we're supposed to do things in the church. A matter of fact, this afternoon one of our staff members sent me a video of a certain so-called church, I can't really call these things churches, a giant, enormous congregation that had a Superbowl emphasis for this Sunday morning and I think they called it the Superbowl of Preaching. Some of y'all may have run across that somewhere and I mean, the production, I mean, what they put together, it was rather amazing. I mean, it it was a feat. The the the props and they had turf out there and they had refs and umpires and had several people preaching. They had on football jerseys and, I mean, it was a shenanigan, man. They had they had two broadcasters, looked like a professional broadcasters and they were talking like they were broadcasting the game and they had a profession football player being interviewed, and it went on and on and um they ah kept talking about win, win, win. It's good to win and God wants you to win. You oughta be a winner but sometimes you're not winning and sometimes you're in the struggle but you oughta be a winner and you oughta win, and then they got to the very end and I want to be honest, I didn't listen to everything, I couldn't stomach it, so I did fast forward to the end. I said, "I want to see how they close this thing out." So the guy at the end with his football jersey on is up there rah-rahing and he said, "Now some of you are hurting or," I'm not quoting him perfectly, he said, "but what you need is Jesus." And in effect, "If you get Jesus, you can win," and he said, "I want you to pray your bow your head," and I forgot how he did the little prayer, nothing was said about sin, nothing was said about the holiness of God, nothing was said about conviction of sin, nothing was said about repentance, nothing was said

about embracing Christ as Savior and Lord, here's what he said, "Move your feet forward. You're getting if you want Jesus, move your feet forward." And I mean, the moment he said that, he said, "That's great! Now you've got what you need," and everybody went, "Woo!" and started clapping and praising the Lord. I mean, folks, it's worse than you think it is. It's bizarre.

Folks, the only way you can be saved is to understand sound doctrine. I'm not saying you have to understand all of it but you need to know something of the holiness of God, the righteousness of God. You need to know something about man's fallenness, something about your sinfulness, something about the fact that you justly deserve God's wrath and condemnation. You need to know something about the cross, something about the fact that he fulfilled all righteousness by dying in our place, something about his death for our sins, his rising for our justification, and of course, you can preach many many hours on all those doctrines. It's not the least amount of truth that gets people saved necessarily, God might do that but that's very very rare. We need to make sure our children, our grandchildren and our loved ones get the most truth possible because faith comes by hearing, it's a present tense verb, hearing, hearing, hearing, and the more truth they hear of the Gospel, the more likely they are to embrace it and believe on it.

So I don't know how anybody in the world could have gotten saved hearing this man because he never did mentioned what are you getting saved from. The best I could tell, you're getting saved from losing because all he talked about was win, win, win. Anyway, I don't want to belabor that point but and that's just, folks, a lot of this stuff is out there and these are doctrines. This is a doctrine of what the Gospel is so it's a strange doctrine of what the Gospel is. It's a doctrine about who Jesus is, but it's a strange doctrine about who even Jesus is. There's the doctrine of man, their view of what man needs and what man man is, is not what the Bible says. The Bible says man is totally depraved. He's by nature a child of wrath, etc. etc. None of that was mentioned. So the doctrine was strange but I can tell you what it did do, it's built a great big crowd of spectators. Hadn't built a church but a great big crowd of spectators and they call it a church.

So Paul tells Timothy, "You stay on in Ephesus because some guys are drifting off and embracing some strange doctrine," doctrine, the word "doctrine" means "teachings," "and I want you to get it straightened out." Alright, number 3. The minister's mission not only is to be local church centered and be unrelenting in the battle to preserve sound doctrine, but number 3, to understand that false teachers completely miss the point. They completely miss what God's up to because they're doing their own thing and using God's name, using certain godly labels but they're not they totally miss what God is about in the world today.

Look at it there in verse 4, and he gives some particulars of the specific fads and false teachings which were prominent 2,000 years ago in this Gentile region of Ephesus. He says verse 4, "nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering," and the New American Standard calls it, "the administration of God which is by faith." That phrase "the administration of God" means what God's purpose and what God's about now in the world. They miss what God's really

doing through his Gospel. They miss what God's really doing through his church and their teaching doesn't line up with what God's given us. Their teaching doesn't line up with what God's about. They miss it. Now understand these are elders more than likely because they're teaching men in the church in Ephesus. They're leaders in the church. They claim to be God-fearers. They claim to be men of God and that's what makes it so hard at times. That's why you men have to be discerning and you've got to be wise.

So we now live in what we sometimes call the Gospel dispensation or the church dispensation. That's what God's doing. God's not doing his work through building a nation, he did that in the Old Testament through Israel, but all that was just a foreshadowing of what his real work was gonna be and that's through churches, called out assemblies of believers. That's the way he's doing it today. And they miss the message of grace in the Gospel that saves people and puts them in the church, and they miss the doctrines about what the church is to be and how it's to function. So they miss everything about how to fashion the church and how to function as the church. They miss the beautifying of the church. They miss God's divine order of things so instead of teaching that which supports the true Gospel, instead of teaching that which builds true churches, they chase after things which are of no value.

Let's see, how does he say it down there in verse 6? Look at verse 6, "For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to," what? "Fruitless discussions." Now, trust me, if you were living in this day and you heard these men, if you were not discerning, you would probably be impressed by their preaching. You would probably be impressed, you'd think, "These men are sharp, man. These men are knowledgeable. These men are intelligent. These men know what God's doing." And Paul says, "They don't know anything." When they get done with everything, it's completely fruitless as far as what matters, it's completely fruitless as far as God's work goes, and so he says, "Timothy, when you get there, correct them because you need to understand they miss the whole point. They're missing everything because they don't get the true Gospel and they don't get the true church."

Now some of these specific things they are doing, this false teaching they're throwing out there, is what Timothy calls here in verse 4, "paying attention to myths," that means fables. If it's false, it's a fable, it's a myth, it's not anything true. It's not anything we can look to the word and find a foundation for. And then he said "endless genealogies." As a matter of fact, you could take the word "endless" and put it in front of all of these because he's saying they just keep teaching and teaching and teaching, keeps evolving, evolving, evolving, and one guy tries to upstage the next guy and take this argument to this next place. And then there was a big, the fad of the day was studying genealogies and even among the Gnostics. Remember the Gnostics? The Gnostics held themselves as elitists. They were a small group of elitists and they knew understood the things of God but the common man couldn't and so you just had to listen to what the elitist said, the Gnostic elitist, if you wanted to know God and know how to please God. But within the Gnostic teachings, there was this thing of spiritual genealogies and I don't know what it means or how it works, but his point is it just goes on and on, it's endless, and they want to be so impressive and they want you to be impressed with their teaching, but he says, "They

don't understand, they miss the whole point, that they're not teaching and preaching the Gospel, they're not seeing that it's salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone that builds the church." They'll throw Jesus in the side door kinda like that video I saw of that church this morning. Jesus popped in there a little late in the whole thing instead of starting with Jesus, continuing with Jesus and ending with Jesus, and the point is if Jesus is one of the things you're talking about, if you're adding Jesus onto your philosophy to give it some credibility, you don't get it. That's what Paul's saying, "You miss everything. You don't get what God's doing in the world."

And folks, you gotta look long term. There are a lot of things that look successful, there are a lot of things that look like they're helpful in the short term. Now short term, I mean a few years. Things can look like, "Boy, this is great. This is solid." Like I've challenged pastors many times, they'll be doing this, they'll be doing that, they'll be doing this and doing that, and I'll see that it's got a lot of weakness and it's got a lot of faultiness in it, and they'll tell me, "Yeah, but that's working. Yeah, but these people da, da, da, da, da." And I'll say, "Call me in year 13. Call me in year 22. Call me in year 30. Let's see what the ultimate fruit is." I've often said, I used to say you oughta have to pastor in one place in 30 years and live with your own fruit. Now I can say you oughta pastor 38 years because then you realize what will God really use to build his church. Well, these false teachers were building a a a following. They were building a a group of people that were wowed by them and enthralled with their great teaching on these myths and genealogies and different things, but he said it's fruitless because it's not according to the faith that's once for all delivered to the saints.

Another illustration that just came to my mind as I was thinking on things I've experienced as a pastor and how and bless their hearts, look, there is some good Southern Baptist guys and good men of God who love the Lord, but there's a lot of nonsense out there too. For years in the Alabama Baptist State Convention, ah they had these um getaway retreats for church staffs and they were gonna teach church staffs how to love each other, teach church staffs how to have unity, how to have camaraderie, how to have oneness, because it's notorious that church staffs fight and split churches and do all that stuff, and if you went to these retreats, what they'd done, they'd gone to the corporate world and got these team building concepts out of the corporate world, like we need what the world has to help us get along with each other. And so you went on these retreats with your staff and they took you out in the woods and you went on hikes in the woods and you did obstacle courses together, and did that thing where you fall off of something and other guys have to catch you, you know, to learn how to trust each other. And then I don't know what else you did, but you did these things that has been big in the corporate years world for years, but you know what, here's the problem: they miss the main thing. The main thing is their hearts aren't right. If a staff member is independent spirited, if a staff member has the sin of pride, if a staff member has selfishness, if a staff member comes on board paddling his own canoe, he's gonna be a problem. He's gonna cause disunity. The only way he's gonna ever be a part of the team is to repent. I've had staff members before that you could take them to a 100 of these retreats and go on 100 field trips and do 100 obstacle courses, but until their hearts got right they'd never get along with anybody else. Are you hearing me, church? It's like we look to all the things that are fruitless

instead of the true, the main things that really will help somebody. Those staff members that I said wouldn't repent, they're not here anymore and they don't need to be and they're gonna always be doing their own thing somewhere.

My point is I'm not talking about staff members, I'm just talking about the propensity, the ever never-ending temptation and and and wondering we have to look and see what the world can give the church. I'm gonna tell you what the world can give the church: nothing. Did you we have Christ and the wisdom of God. Now don't misunderstand me, certainly there's some good things that are sideline things, they're not main things, they're helpful things but they're not the primary things and so as Paul tells him to go and straighten out these churches, he said these guys are into intellectualisms, puffing themselves up, blowing themselves up with these great, knowledgeable, spiritual leaders but they miss the main things and they're hurting the church, not helping the church.

They consider themselves Bible scholars. Look at verse 7, "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." They think they're great scholars, they think they're clever helpers of the church and of the Gospel but actually he says they miss everything and they don't even know what they're talking about. Now here's the point: these guys come in and they come into the church and say, "Now if you really want to be right with Jesus, you've got to follow these rules or these principles or these new laws we figured out are important, and if you'll follow these rules, these principles, these laws," whatever they call them, "these precepts and Jesus, then you'll be on the right track." But what they don't understand is that Christ came to fulfill the law for us and any notion of law working whether it's the old Mosaic law or some new law these teachers might come up with, or whatever teacher might come up with in today's realms of professing Christendom, anybody that brings a works or a law to the Gospel has lost the Gospel and doesn't understand anything. That's what he's saying. They don't understand anything. I know they sound impressive, I know they're brilliant, they can use big words, they're great bloggers and great conference speakers, but they miss everything.

Really what they're about is promoting their own platforms, espousing their own cleverness and their own learning. It's about self-exaltation. It's about self-glory and they're so confident in themselves. There was a period of time in the last three decades when we would go to these so-called church growth conferences and we'd go to these conferences and there was not hardly anything mentioned about doctrine, about the holiness of God, about the doctrine of sin, the doctrines of repentance, all these great doctrines that you must have to grow a church. Not you don't just, look, these doctrines are not just things you give a wink and a nod at and say, "Oh, of course we believe that. Now let's go on to what works." No, no, these doctrines are what works. We have to thunder and preach these things.

But we'd go to these conference and they would just talk about everything in the world. I'll never forget going to Rick Warren's conference at Shocco Springs. He's the "Purpose Driven" guy and he came out of the gate talking about, "Guys, you gotta quit talking about sin in the church." Well, the staff almost had to hold me down. I said, "What are

you talking about? How do you preach the Gospel if man's not a sinner? Why did Jesus die this bloody brutal death on a cross, because I need my felt needs met?" I mean, literally he came out and went on and on about people know they're sinners, you don't need to talk about it. No, they don't. They don't know who a holy God is so they don't know what sin is. These have to be taught and preached. They're missing everything. And he went on and on. They'd talk about here you've got to do your parking lot this way if you want to grow a church. You gotta have restrooms that look like this if you want to grow the church. You gotta have greeters that do these things if you want to grow the church. You gotta have this style of music if you're gonna grow the church. You've gotta preach sermons on what people's felt needs are if you want to grow the church. You've got to survey the community and find out what they want in the church and change the church to be like they want it to be. You mean I go after the ungodly, unregenerate world and ask them how Christ's bride is supposed to be? Folks, that's what they're saying. I'm not making this up. And on and on and on.

Well, look, there's some good in knowing how to do a parking lot, there's some good in knowing how to do your restroom, but that's not the main stuff. This, in effect, is a strange doctrine. Folks don't need to know how to get the parking lot right if they don't know what the Gospel is. Some things are first things, amen? That's what Paul is writing to Timothy about. These guys are into stuff that makes them sound like experts and they miss everything. They miss the whole point.

I don't have time to go to Jude 3 again but in Jude 3 he talks about how these people have crept into the churches and then he gets to the end of verse 4 of Jude and he said, "And they turned the grace of God into licentiousness." They come up with a type, a view of church and a view of forgiveness and a view of grace where everybody can just keep on sinning and be happy about it. No call to repentance. No call to holiness. No church discipline. That's what the book of Jude tells us will be common in churches and I'm sure that always goes together. Listen, are you listening to me this evening? Anytime there's strange doctrine being taught, if you get back to the roots of it, it's so somebody can get by with their sin. Are you... I mean, I've been doing this a long time. Whether they're an ardent legalist on this side with all these rules and all these do's and don'ts you gotta keep, or they're over here saying the grace of God let's you do anything you want, really behind both of those is usually sin issues. Now look, we all have sin issues. Can we get a humble amen? But there's a difference between a person that God's saved and he's a humble repenter of his sin versus a guy who wants to wallow and walk in his sin. They turned the grace of God into licentiousness.

Last point. He's writing to Timothy, he says, "Timothy, I want you to be local church centered. I want you to stay in the unrelenting battle of preserving sound doctrine in the church. Timothy, I want you to grasp anew that these false teachers, they're impressive in many ways, but at the end of the day they really don't get the point. They don't understand anything about what how God wants to build his church and how he wants to save souls. They act they know it all but they don't." Then he says, "Finally, Timothy, you need to understand or possess rather, the traits of a true teacher." He's talked a lot

about the false teacher and he said, "Here's some traits of the true teacher, Timothy, I want you to have."

Now the first one or another one, let's put....he said, "Timothy, now here's the way it's supposed to be. Here's the way a man of God is supposed to function." In other words, "Timothy, you've gotta be on a totally different trajectory than these false teachers." Timothy, your ministry, and brothers and sisters, my ministry, our ministry, must flow out of these four things. A. An abiding, agape love. An abiding agape love. Look at verse 5, Paul says, "In contrast to how these false teachers are functioning, the goal of our instruction or our commands or our teaching and preaching, if you want to elaborate further, is love." Now that word "love" there is the word "agape." In other words, he's saying love is what's made us different and love is what abounds in our heart. Now look, this is not man's love, this is not love that's common in mankind, this is this supernatural unique love that came in us when we were born again, when the Spirit of God came in us. He said, "That's where our flow should come out of, this abiding Gospel agape love God put in us."

Now think about it. Love is our theme. In love before the foundation of the world, he chose us. In love in time and space history, he sent Jesus to die on the cross and he redeemed us. In love, he saw to it that we heard the Gospel and we believed on Jesus Christ and he converted us. In love when we believed, he sent the Spirit of God within us to indwell us. In love, he gives us local churches that we might be nurtured and encouraged, hold each other accountable and encourage and love and go on for God together. That's a love gift. Look, this church is a love gift from God to you. Everything we have is about love. In love, he gives us the Scriptures so that we might follow these Scriptures so that we might be tools in his hands to properly fashion the bride and function as the bride. You've heard that before, haven't you, beautifying the bride? That's what we're doing as a local church. That's what the local church is, his bride. All of this is in love.

And I don't have time to go over them but our purpose in strategy statements that we function under here at Grace Life Church of the Shoals, we have a Purpose Statement, then we have a Congregational Worship Strategy Statement, we have a Small Group Ministry Strategy Statement, and a Personalized Strategic World Missions Strategy Statement, and we've been following this for over three decades and I've challenged everybody I know everywhere to show me anything else in Scripture that we're missing and I've never had anybody correct us on this. Not that they're perfect but they do outline the basic biblical truths that we're to be functioning on if we're gonna properly fashion and function as the bride of Christ.

That's a love gift from God. He's given all that to us and then finally, one day he's gonna return, he's gonna raise up the bodies of the dead in Christ, their body is gonna be glorified, cleansed, purified and gloriously glorified. Their spirit and soul will come down and meet with them. Those who are alive will be glorified immediately and we'll all be glorified with the Lord. I mean, love is everything but it's not man's love, it's God's love. As a matter of fact, the word "agape" is a word the New Testament writers invented

because there was no love on earth that could describe God's love so they gave us agape to say it's not like man's love. Man's love is fickle. Man's love is conditional. Man's love is up. Man's love is down. God's love is steadfast and consistent always. We are really, do you know what we are? We're love children. I'm a love child. You're a love child. You know what that means? That means you're illegitimate but not really, we're the most legitimate there is as his love child.

So what he's saying is in love for us, God has fully, wholly, completely fulfilled the law. He's now listen, he's fulfilled the law for us, he's fulfilled the law in us. Now listen, don't don't go to sleep on me. Don't think about a ballgame. You need to hear this. In love, he has brought us to the place the law could never take us. Are you hearing me? In love, he's brought us to the place the law could never take us. So here's his point: what are these guys gonna teach you better than the Gospel of love? The Gospel of love got you somewhere keeping all the rules and all the laws of all the people of all the ages could never get you. Grace got you there. Christ got you there. Love got you there. It's done and you've got to walk in that love, Timothy, that love's what we're about, the love that sees. The love of God for us has settled everything we need. There's no need for other teachings. There's no need for other laws. There's no need for the rules. Christ and his love and the Gospel has completed the task of getting us to God and giving us a right standing before this holy God. He wants you to get the contrast. He said, "These guys you're gonna go straighten out at the church in Ephesus, Timothy, they don't know this love." I think in this sense he's implying they're likely not converted. You have to get converted to have this love. They're flowing out of the flesh, not the new agape love heart that comes in when you're truly converted.

Well, secondly, abiding love and dovetailing with that is the next phrase, I call this purified heart motives. Verse 5, "the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart." That means purified heart motives. Now here's what this means: when we're born again, when the Spirit of God comes into us evidenced by our repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, when that new birth occurs, then we begin to be purified to looking to worldly goals, worldly ambitions or worldly methods to do God's work. Did you hear that? We're purified. As a minister, I remember so distinctly how God, how I started my ministry and had a lot of worldly ideas about how this was gonna work, and over and over and over through the word of God, some godly teaching and reading, God would continually bring me to repentance and I would continually repent of worldly concepts, worldly elements, and worldly ideas and methods, and continue to settle on God's methods, preaching the Gospel, trusting the Spirit to change lives and bring men to salvation and build his church. Here's what he's saying, "The contrast, Timothy, is, I want you to function that way, out of pure, holy, Spirit-wrought motives, not worldly, carnal motives to build God's church."

Now brothers and sisters, old Dr. Bob Pittman used to say that the Holy Spirit would leave the average Baptist church and they wouldn't miss him for three months. I saw him in the airport the other day, I was flying back to somebody, he was flying back from somewhere and I said, "Brother Bob, are you still," we were talking about the shape the churches were in which he agreed, by the way, gave us a lot of compliments, and you

know, he and I disagree on a few things. We still love each other. I said, "Brother Bob, are you still telling people that the Holy Spirit could leave the average Baptist church and they wouldn't even miss him for three months?" His point is they don't know what the work of the Spirit is. They're making everything work in human fleshly methods and gimmicks. They don't know what it's like to see God's Spirit really change people and build the church. That's what he's saying. I said, "Are you still telling people that the Holy Spirit could leave the church and Baptists wouldn't even miss him for three months?" He said, "No, it's now six months." And I said, "Well, you're right. You're right."

Oh, how God has had to purify me and I'm telling you, folks, I'm in year 38, I am hooked like heroin on God's Gospel and God's Spirit saving men and building the church. If you want something else, you have to go somewhere else. I've done tried all the other. See, some of y'all are young, you hadn't done stupid stuff yet. I've done it, trust me. It's wrong and that's why I say we sometimes have to shepherd good folks to this. Brother Jackie helped me see some of these things. Man, he exhorted me. I'll never forget that. He exhorted me to look for the Spirit's work. Oh, thank God. And see, there's some guys listening, there's folks that listen to this broadcast all over the world. There are some preachers out there I believe that even this night listen to this broadcast and the Holy Spirit of God is saying, "That's where you're missing it." Trust the Spirit of God to save souls and build the church through the Gospel. Now you've gotta have weighty preaching. Now listen to me, you need to be functioning like a church though or you'll hinder, you'll quench the Spirit. If we give up on church discipline, we give up on small group ministry, we give up on personalized strategic world missions, then we'll quench the Spirit, and if we keep preaching the word, functioning like we're supposed to function, we can we can trust that the Spirit of God under the sound and faithful preaching and teaching of the Gospel will save our fellows and girls and save our grandchildren and save our friends and save our neighbors for the glory of God. And I'll tell ya like Spurgeon used to tell them back in his day when men began to do fanciful worldly things to help God out, he'd say, "Look, if God's not gonna save them with the truth, he's sure not gonna save them with a lie." You say, "Well, it's not working fast enough the way you're doing it." Well, if he's not gonna save them with the truth, you're not gonna save them with a lie either. Old Spurgeon came out of his church one day and there was a drunk leaning on the street post, "Mr. Spurgeon? I'm one of your converts." He said, "You must be but you're none of His."

Do you know how often in the Shoals area I go into a restaurant or someplace and somebody'll come up and, bless their hearts, I don't remember them and say, "Brother Jeff, you baptized me. You saved me." I want to crawl under the floor. I'm just thankful God let's us grow, amen? And he purifies our motives to get out of the worldly nonsense and trust the Spirit of God and the truth of God to change souls and build his church and glorify his name.

Well, those false teachers, it wasn't out of a pure heart motive, it was out a heart out of a heart motive of pride and self-promotion that they were infiltrating the church at Ephesus. Ephesus and Timothy's job was to help clean that stuff up.

Well, thirdly, C. The trait of a true teacher is he has a confirming conscience. I won't say much here. What I mean is he has no condemnation that he is walking in impure motives and worldly strategies or effects to make God's work happen. He's got a clear conscience he's doing it the right way. I have things that I need to continually grow in and repent of, but I can look you straight in the eye as your pastor and tell you I have a clear conscience I'm teaching you right, I'm preaching to you the truth. I hope I keep growing in it and keep repenting where I'm missing it but I thought know of nothing where we're not on track and I commit to walk in that and by God's grace be that way until I die. I told God again and I'm telling this many times almost every day, "Lord, please save me from me so I can be used for You the rest of my life."

Number 4 or D, a fourth trait of the true teachers that contrast with these false teachers is it all flows out of a genuine faith. He says at the end of verse 5, "the goal of our instruction is love," that was the first one, "from a pure heart motives," that was the second one, "a good conscience," that's the third one, "and then a sincere faith." In other words, the faith of the false teachers is most likely a fiend, a fake faith, but we have a true faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." I am convinced that includes faith. Faith is the gift of God. There is mysteries there I don't understand but at the end of the day I think what Paul is telling Timothy is this, "You possess the kind of faith that God puts in a man. It's not a man faith, it's the faith God puts in a man. Timothy, you embrace these truths. You love these truths. You hold to this Gospel because God put something in you to want it, to embrace it." And have you realized, you can use the most clever arguments, the most persuasive expressions, the most gifted a a a talks to try to get a guy to get it, but it takes the Spirit of God to birth in them that that capacity to say, "I believe this. I believe it. I'm a sinner and He's my Savior. I believe it and I base my life, my family, my all, my eternity on that." That's a true faith. He says, "Timothy, you've got that. You've got that trait. Those false teachers don't have that. They're not functioning out of a true believing faith, a faith that embraces the true Gospel and a faith that embraces a true church from pure motives and a confirming clear conscience. Those are the traits of a faithful and true teacher."