

The Charge to Timothy – Part 2

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul's greeting and charge to Timothy: confront those who teach false doctrine in the church
2. aim – to cause us to understand the importance of sound doctrine as central to godliness
3. passage – 1 Timothy 1:1-20

b. outline

1. The Greeting into the Charge (1 Timothy 1:1-2)
2. The Substance of the Charge (1 Timothy 1:3-11)
3. The Basis of the Charge (1 Timothy 1:12-20)

c. opening

1. the **structure** of the letter (**so far; vv. 1-4**)
 - a. an opening greeting, whereby Paul identifies himself and his prayer for his friend
 - b. an urging by Paul for Timothy to remain in Ephesus and *continue* the work they started there
 - c. a charge to Timothy to address the **heterodoxy** that has invaded the church
 1. specifically, the advancement of “*different doctrine*” than the apostolic teaching
 2. which led to focuses on myths, genealogies, and speculations – *serious side-effects* in the lives of ordinary believers, which was distracting them from pursuing the real goal of orthodoxy
 3. Paul charges Timothy to command those teaching such heterodoxies to put them aside and return to orthodoxy – Timothy was free to decide if he would stay, but (if he did stay) he was to *command* those teaching false doctrine to stop
 - d. thus, the *nature* of the charge to Timothy is to address *head-on* the false teachings in the church
2. the **indicative** of the letter
 - a. **i.e.** the *central truth* from which Paul operates, and from which the rest of the letter flows
 - b. **principle: the church of Jesus Christ is defined by the boundaries of its doctrinal truth**
 1. not by its “warmth” or its “success” or its “size” or its “offerings” or its “relevance”
 - a. **e.g.** the new blog series by John MacArthur confronting the “social justice” agenda
 2. the church *ceases* to be the church when it embraces something “other” than apostolic truth
 3. thus, in the *imperative* section of the book, Paul will take up various “structural” matters which hinge on this reality – but his goal is still *doctrinal*: the church is always defined by its *truth*

II. The Substance of the Charge (1 Timothy 1:3-11)

Content

b. the aim of the charge (v. 5a)

1. aim = the goal or target of his charge to Timothy; the *purpose* behind such a myopic focus
 - a. **note:** the ESV and NASB translate the article before “charge” as “our” – although it is singular in the Greek, it is reasonable to translate it this way because Paul would have considered the charge of Timothy to be the same charge he himself had labored under while in Ephesus
2. the aim: “love” = two possibilities of how Paul is using this word (**combined**):
 - a. **first:** that love *amongst others* is the goal (**i.e.** you loving each other by *hearing* these things)
 1. that proper doctrine in the church *leads to* a true sense of love amongst its members
 2. because the true gospel leads to *humility* before others; it stimulates *compassion* for others; it expresses *truthfulness* before others; it promotes *sacrifice* rather than self-centeredness
 3. sound doctrine is **Christocentric** – focusing our understandings upon *Christ* cannot help but lead us to love others *as he has loved us*
 4. but, false doctrine leads to an *unloving spirit* permeating the church – it is fundamentally *selfish*
 - a. **e.g.** promoting oneself as a “great teacher” over others (1:7); establishing legalisms that promote selfish power over others (4:1-3); selfish fleshly passions (**i.e.** unmarried widows; 5:11-12); conceitedness and factionalism which promote greed (6:3-5)
 5. **note:** Paul will attribute these to “*deceitful spirits and teachings of demons*” (4:1), or “*straying after Satan*” (5:15) – the *source* of selfishness in the world

- b. **second:** that it is loving to *tell others* of this (**i.e.** us loving you by *telling* you these things)
1. **problem:** in our culture, it is inherently “unloving” to speak truth to those who wish to remain “blissfully ignorant” – in fact, now, any attempt to actually speak truth will result in open hostility
 2. but, we must remember: the gospel of Jesus has *always* been offensive, because it is the message that a world of rebel sinners *cannot bear to hear* (**John 6:61, 66**)
“Do you take offense at this? ... After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.”
 3. **principle: it is fundamentally unloving to allow people in the church to continue to embrace false teachings, because those false teaching will eventually lead them to ruin**
- c. **the origin of the charge (v. 5b)**
1. “*love that issues from ...*” = coming from; out of; the source of this love; where it **originates**
 - a. either (**see above**) things which will be true of believers, leading them to love each other; or, things true of Timothy (and Paul) from which they are justified to speak as they do (**both?**)
 2. “*pure heart*” = a purity (or cleanness) of desire; a passion to *know* and *do* what is right
 - a. “*heart*” = the control center of a person; the very nature within us from which all of our thoughts, emotions, and will emanate; who we are at the very core of our existence, which defines us
 1. in our fallen state, our *nature* is desperately corrupted and wicked (**Jer. 17:9, Matt. 15:18f KJV**)
“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? ... But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder ...”
 2. but, in regeneration, God graciously grants us a new heart, a new nature (**Ezek. 11:19, 36:26**)
 - b. “*pure*” = catharsis; a purification or cleansing; the elimination of the harmful to leave the pure
 1. **e.g.** David prays for a “*clean heart*” after his sin (**Psa. 51:10**) – he knows that his is a *nature* problem; a problem with who he is (at his core)
 2. but, in regeneration, God puts within us a nature that *loves truth*, that desires what is good
 - c. **principle: genuine Christian love issues from a nature that is made pure by a true understanding of Christ Jesus – not a selfish nature still focused on what is false**
3. “*good conscience*” = a clear sense of knowing ourselves; a true lack of shame or guilt
 - a. “*conscience*” = the faculty by which we apprehend the moral demands of God and realize shame and guilt when we violate them; the sense of moral responsibility inherent in all humanity
 1. in our fallen state, our consciences are “*seared*” (cauterized); rendered inoperative (**1 Tim. 4:2**)
“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared”
 2. but, in regeneration, God “*awakens*” our consciences to *appreciate* his law – it becomes “*good*” as a useful tool guiding us away from selfishness and towards godliness (**see vv. 8-11**)
 - b. **principle: genuine Christian love issues from an awareness of and love of the law of God – not a selfish desire to sin regardless of how it hurts others**
4. “*sincere faith*” = a trust in Christ based on a solid desire to truly know him
 - a. “*sincere*” = genuine; without hypocrisy; unfeigned (real)
 1. a “*false*” faith (based on false doctrine) is an *outward* profession only; a “*feigning*” of true belief masquerading behind “*all the right words*”
 2. false doctrine creates *insincerity* – since it demands no *genuine* conversion, no *lasting* or *radical trust*, a doctrinal system built on “*speculations*” leads only to a life of hypocrisy
 3. **e.g.** if you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence from your day-to-day life to convince a jury that your actions are a result of your commitment to Christ?
 - b. **principle: genuine Christian love issues from a faith that is built on an understanding of truth, and a desire to live that truth – not a selfish sense of trust only in oneself**
5. **application: the church is to be defined by a love that emanates from truly converted people, who strive for holiness and a clear conscience, while holding fast to a faith built on truth**
 - a. these are the very characteristics of Christ himself: possessing the very *nature* of God, he lived a life of *pure holiness* with a *clear conscience*, all while *speaking the truth* and *trusting* that his Father’s plan was perfect
 - b. **the Lord’s Supper images this truth: the bread represents his perfect life, and the cup represents his absolute trust that what his Father had promised was true, not only for him (being raised) but also for all of those for whom he would die (as atonement)**