

INTRODUCTION

We would love spend all of our time in the church affirming the true doctrines about our Lord Jesus Christ: who He is as both God and man in one person, what He has done for us in washing us clean from the guilt of our sins in His own blood shed on the cross. But the Lord's apostles have taught us the necessity to spend a good deal of our time in the church denouncing false doctrines that lead people to depart from the faith. So, having enjoyed for some weeks the exposition of 1 Timothy 3:16, about The Mystery of Godliness, we now are working our way through 1 Timothy chapter 4.

We have received the warning not to give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. We have heard the description of false teachers, that they are hypocrites who speak lies, their own consciences seared with a hot iron. And we have heard two leading examples of the kinds of false doctrines such teachers present as if they were true: first, they forbid people to marry; second, they command people to abstain from foods

These two examples given to us here in the Bible will serve us very well in detecting and resisting false teachers and their false doctrines, if we take the care to understand them. The first example, forbidding to marry, the apostle states, but then does not expound. So I am leaving that one alone for now. The second example, commanding to abstain from foods, the apostle spends several lines expounding. So that is the one I am taking up today.

My plan for today is to take the main statement of truth in this passage, and show you how it appears several places in the Bible, to help establish that truth firmly in each person's conscience. Here is that statement of truth regarding food: Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused.

I am aware of some of the questions you may have about that, because of things the Bible says that might seem to conflict with this statement. As we read together, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused," you may have questions such as:

What about the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

What about blood, and meat with the blood in it?

What about foods that the Law of Moses said were unclean, like pork?

What about foods with leaven or yeast in them, and the feat of unleavened bread?

What about foods sacrificed to idols?

Those are the questions I know come up. You may think of other good ones. I do not intend to ignore any of those issues. Instead, I would love to address them thoroughly. I haven't decided yet whether or not to take up each of those things in future sermons. I'm thinking about it. Whether I do or not, if any of those issues is of interest to you, you are very welcome to ask me about them today, or some other convenient time.

I will tell you two things now about those questions:

1. Nothing the Bible teaches about any of those things actually conflicts with the truth we are studying today.
2. The truth we are studying today is foundational to understanding what the Bible says about those things.

So, for the fortifying your conscience against false doctrine, that you may stand firm in the faith, according to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, consider with me today the truth that

Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused.

TEXT

1 Timothy 4:1-4

BODY

- I. What God Told the Whole Human Race About This Through Adam and Noah
 - A. Through Adam - Genesis 1:29 And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.
 1. Note that God said, "I have given you"
 2. Note the agreement between this verse and our verse from 1 Timothy
 - a) "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused"
 - B. Through Noah - Genesis 9:3-4 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. (4) But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.
 1. Note again that God said, "I have given you"
 2. Note "I have given you all things" [ESV "I give you everything"]
 - a) not all things absolutely or without any limit
 - b) but all things in the two categories God just named
 - (1) plants
 - (2) animals
 - c) the flesh and bones of the animals are meant, not the blood
 - d) human beings are not included in what God means here
 - C. Note the agreement between this verse and our verse from 1 Timothy
 1. Gen 9:3 "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things..."
 2. "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused"
 - D. We have read here in Genesis what God orders for all mankind, the whole human race
 1. that we may eat any of His plants and any of His animals
 2. this is a grant from God Himself; this is part of our charter from the Creator
 - E. You can understand, at this point, why the apostle Paul, in 1 Timothy chapter 4, speaks so harshly of those who command people to abstain from foods
 1. God Himself created the plants and animals, and gave all of them to us for our food
 2. it is exceedingly wicked, then, for a person to command that people must abstain from some of those foods

What God told the whole human race through Adam and Noah is that He has given us all the plants and all the animals for our food.

- II. What the Lord Told the Whole Church About This Through Peter - Acts 10:9-16
- A. Peter had lived his whole life under the terms of the Old Covenant made by God with Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai
 - B. But that covenant had come to an end when the Lord Jesus died on the cross, making the New Covenant
 - C. Many of the Jewish believers, including even the apostle Peter, were slow to understand the implications of that, including the fact that the Old Covenant laws making certain foods “clean” and certain other foods “unclean” or “common” were all repealed, were no longer in effect, even for the Jews
 - D. The practical application of this for the church was that the Jewish preachers were no longer to maintain a separation between themselves and the Gentiles, but were to go preach the good news of Jesus Christ to all
 - 1. they could go to a Gentile man’s home
 - 2. they could eat the Gentile man’s food with him
 - 3. they could preach the good news of Jesus Christ to him
 - E. Note the agreement between verses 12-13 and the first part of our verse
 - 1. (12) In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. (13) And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."
 - 2. “every creature of God is good”
 - F. Note the agreement between verses 15-16 and the second part of our verse
 - 1. (14) But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." (15) And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."
 - 2. “and nothing is to be refused [or rejected]”

What God told the whole human race through Adam and Noah is that He has given us all the plants and all the animals for our food.

What God told the whole church through Peter is that we may kill and eat all manner of animals, and that we should not object that any of them are unclean.

III. What the Apostle Paul Wrote About This to the Church in Rome - Romans 14

- A. Romans 14:7-10 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. (8) For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. (10) But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
 - 1. verse 9a, note the great truths of the resurrection: Christ died and rose and lived again!
 - 2. verse 9b, verse 10b Christ is Lord and Judge of all
 - 3. verse 10a therefore it is not for man to make rules for other men, but for Christ to rule over all
- B. Romans 14:1-2 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. (2) For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.
 - 1. note that the person who does not understand he may eat all things is described as weak in the faith
 - 2. the other person, who believes he may eat all things, is not described as weak in the faith
- C. Romans 14:14a I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself...
 - 1. note the agreement between verse 14 and our verse in 1 Timothy
 - a) "there is nothing unclean of itself"
 - b) "every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused or rejected"
- D. Romans 14:20a Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure...
 - 1. note the agreement between verse 14 and our verse in 1 Timothy
 - a) "all things indeed are pure"
 - b) "every creature of God is good"

What God told the whole human race through Adam and Noah is that He has given us all the plants and all the animals for our food.

What the Lord told the whole church through Peter is that we may kill and eat all manner of animals, and that we should not object that any of them are unclean.

What the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome is that there is nothing unclean of itself, all things indeed are pure, and that it is the weak conscience that thinks a person may not eat certain foods.

- IV. What the Apostle Paul Wrote About This to the Church in Corinth - 1 Corinthians 10:25-27 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; (26) for "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL ITS FULLNESS." (27) If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.
- A. This is very practical instruction from the Lord's apostle
 - B. verse 25 If you are choosing what to eat, eat whatever is sold in the market
 - C. verse 27 If someone else is choosing for you what to eat, eat whatever is set before you
 - D. in both cases, raise no question for conscience' sake
 - 1. that is, there is no need to make a judgment about whether certain foods are right to eat, and other foods are wrong to eat; when you understand the truth of this matter, there is no such question to be asked
 - E. verse 26 the reason given here is from Psalm 24:1a The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness...
 - 1. every animal on the earth is the Lord's
 - 2. since the Lord gave every animal to us for food,
 - 3. we may eat any animal for food, without having to wonder whether or not it is right do eat that food
 - F. note the agreement of these verses with today's verse from 1 Timothy
 - 1. eat whatever is sold in the market; eat whatever is set before you
 - 2. every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused [or rejected]

CONCLUSION

What God told the whole human race through Adam and Noah is that He has given us all the plants and all the animals for our food.

What God told the whole church through Peter is that we may kill and eat all manner of animals, and that we should not object that any of them are unclean.

What the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome is that there is nothing unclean of itself, all things indeed are pure, and that it is the weak conscience that thinks a person may not eat certain foods.

What the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth is that whether you are the one buying the food, or whether you are the one being served, you may eat whatever is before you, raising no question of conscience.

By His death on the cross, Jesus Christ proclaims forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all who repent and believe in Him. He proves to us the great love that God has for us sinners, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Based on the love that He has shown us, He teaches us to love God and to love our neighbor, and has shown us His great example of how to do those things. He has sent His Holy Spirit to inspire His apostles to write to us, explaining all these things to us. None of what He has told us, and none of what His apostles have written to us, is a command to abstain from certain foods. If you hear anyone teaching that Christians must abstain from certain foods, be warned that you are hearing false doctrine, which, if you give heed to it, will lead you to depart from the faith. You know that command to abstain from certain foods is not from God, for both the original grant from God to Adam and Noah, and the doctrine of the Lord's apostles, is that every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused.

Dillon - Scripture Reading - Genesis 1:1-2:3

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Lord's Supper

Benediction

Haven - Prelude "Jesus Paid It All"

Allison - Trinity 702 "Wonderful Grace of Jesus"

Rita - Trinity 9 "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

Rita - Trinity 441 "Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ"

What the Lord Jesus Taught The Multitudes About Morality and Foods - Matthew 15:7-11, 17-20

- I. Matthew 15:1-6
 - A. Ceremonial washing of hands before eating
 1. we know it is good to wash the hands
 2. they were washing as an extra man-made rule, on top of what God actually had commanded
- II. Matthew 15:7-9 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: (8) 'THESE PEOPLE DRAW NEAR TO ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND HONOR ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. (9) AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.' " [Is 29:13]
 - A. See that the subject of our passage in 1 Timothy 4, which is the false doctrines of hypocritical false teachers, is the same subject the Lord Jesus was addressing
 - B. even though the matter at hand was not false doctrine about not eating certain foods, it was close enough that the same principles applied
- III. Matthew 15:10-11 When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: (11) Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."
 - A. Of course something that is a physical pollution might accidentally go into your mouth and harm your body
 - B. But the Lord Jesus is speaking of moral pollution, of sin
 - C. So He teaches us that it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person
- IV. Note the agreement between our Lord's doctrine here and our verse from 1 Timothy
 - A. "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man"
 - B. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused"

It was a long time, about 2,400 years, between the day when God spoke to Noah about food, and the days when the Lord Jesus came, and when He was establishing His church through the preaching of His apostles. In between there had been the Old Covenant, made by God with Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai. That Old Covenant came to an end when the Lord Jesus died on the cross, instituting in its place the New Covenant, or New Testament. What did the Lord Jesus teach the church through His apostles, regarding food? Were the Old Covenant food laws still in effect? Was the old grant pronounced to Adam and Noah still in effect? The answer, as we will see in the New Testament, is that the Old Covenant food laws are NOT still in effect, because the Old Covenant has ended in the death of Christ. And the old grant pronounced to our race in Adam and Noah still IS in effect.

JRY:

Jesus is the food for all mankind, and the drink. Let no one convince you that you should refuse Him!

Henry on Matthew 15:10-20

Truth must be owned, and duty done; and if any be offended, it is his own fault; it is scandal, not given, but taken.

see Henry on Leviticus 18:6-18

Marriage is a divine institution; this and the sabbath, the eldest of all, of equal standing with man upon the earth: it is intended for the comfort of human life, and the decent and honourable propagation of the human race, such as became the dignity of man's nature above that of the beasts. It is honourable in all, and these laws are for the support of the honour of it. It was requisite that a divine ordinance should be subject to divine rules and restraints, especially because it concerns a thing wherein the corrupt nature of man is as apt as in any thing to be wilful and impetuous in its desires, and impatient of check. Yet these prohibitions, besides their being enacted by an incontestable authority, are in themselves highly reasonable and equitable.

