

Love Out Loud

Introduction

We have spent the last few weeks setting the stage for our understanding of this letter. Paul writing to his protege, Timothy. Paul has sent Timothy to various places in the past for different reasons. This was not Timothy's first rodeo but it is his first dangerous one. Paul sent Timothy previously to Thessalonica. Which compared to Ephesus is a cake walk.

1 Thessalonians 3:2 (ESV) 2 We sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith,

That was an easy assignment....encourage them in their faith....but now Ephesus is totally different. Apparently Timothy was already at Ephesus when it becomes clear to Paul that conditions are critically unhealthy there because of false teaching by immoral persons. Paul therefore has to "urge" Timothy to "stay" there for a specific purpose: to command these false teachers to stop. He had originally urged Timothy to do this on a previous occasion as Paul was heading to Macedonia, and he is now reinforcing that charge.

The gospel is not only a way of thinking. It is a way of living. And it always involves both doctrine and practice.

Paul's first instruction to the young pastor Timothy was essentially this: Guard the gospel! This is a fascinating way to open the letter, especially when we consider all the challenges surrounding the church at Ephesus. Ephesus was a city filled with paganism and rampant immorality and idolatry, and because of these cultural pressures, Paul's first concern was to tell Timothy that he must keep people from teaching false doctrine. The summons is clear: Address anything and everything that pulls people away from the gospel. If we lose the gospel, we lose everything

1 Timothy 1:3–5 (ESV) 3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,

Notice that Paul wastes no time here. He gets straight to the point. Timothy I need you to stay and stop false teaching. In other words, Timothy I need you to guard the truth.

The verb to urge (parakaleo) has a warm, personal feel (though strong) in contrast to the impersonal and imperative overtones of the following verb of command. When Paul urged Timothy to stay it was a lot like my Dad when he used to urge me to mow the yard. Warm, strong, direct and with little wiggle room.

However the word Charge is not warm and fuzzy. It is a strong power word. I need you to charge certain persons to not teach...This is a cease and desist order. This is a word that carries absolute authority and uncompromising obedience. They will stop teaching...one way or the other.

The authoritative word choice here teaches us how dangerous these people are. Paul is telling Timothy I am urging you to stay and fight for the truth.

Paul says to command them not to teach any different doctrine. The same word Paul uses that is translated false doctrines is also going to show up in Chapter 6.

1 Timothy 6:3–5 (ESV) 3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

A different doctrine does not really capture what Paul is trying to say here....It is not that the doctrine is different....a slight slant...a new perspective...This doctrine does not agree with the words of our Lord Jesus...thus .it is a lie...it is false. Different yes....but wrong. It is the most dangerous cancer in the church. It must be resisted, cut out at the core, and removed completely from the Church at Ephesus.

That is Timothy's assignment at Ephesus. Every thing else we will learn aligns and supports that mission.

One should think and act out of a confidence in what God is doing. False teaching, spawning endless detrimental discussions, is the concern of this letter. It arises from disbelief in what God has revealed. Thus, the rejection of faith is not a mere addendum to the sentence, but a major factor in the deterioration of the Ephesian church.

1 Timothy 1:3–5 (ESV) 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

“To devote oneself to something” means here to pay or give attention to it. One can be overly attracted to something intellectually without necessarily giving it personal devotion

The false teachers...rather than devoted to the Scriptures and God's truth....are devoted to myths, endless genealogies and they promote speculation....

Truth never promotes speculation. Speculation says "maybe this is how things are" Truth says "this is how things are" When you surrender to truth you have no need to speculate anymore.

So these lies that they are teaching and speculating about..involve myths, genealogies and lead to speculation. So let's look at these a bit deeper.

In this case “myths” and “genealogies” hold some kind of fascination for the false teachers and their followers. We have to be careful when we speak of myths. To us myths are nice stories that teach us something...you know like a fable or an entertaining story. Maybe like the parables that Jesus taught...or campfire stories of legends..... That is not what is being spoken of here.

1 Timothy 4:7 (ESV) 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;

2 Timothy 4:2–4 (ESV) 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Myths in this context means carefully fabricated and deceitfully twisted lies from hell. They are the opposite of anything that comes from God. These people have infiltrated the Church at Ephesus....they have gained a foothold...and while you might expect this from pagan converts...these people are probably Jewish.

The ultimate problem with the false teaching was that it engendered disputes rather than godly edification. To edify is to build up, and it should be a test of doctrine. How many needless arguments would be avoided if the discussion began with the question, “Does this really build up?” Too often, doctrinal debate only ends up setting Christians against each other instead of building each other up for our work and witness in the world

These warnings seem to have a Jewish context to them...Myths and Genealogies are things that the Jews tend to pursue...not so much the Greek and Gentiles. Look at what Paul tells Titus...Paul links these myths with Jews.

Titus 1:13–14 (ESV) 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth.

Paul continues to warn Titus that these foolish myths and genealogies tend to be associated with quarrels about the law....Jewish Law.

Titus 3:8–11 (ESV) 9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Paul is clearly concerned and warning Timothy and Titus about false teaching from within...and most like from within the Jewish believers of the church at Ephesus. The reason these genealogies are so dangerous is that they are studied to try to leverage elitism. Jews wanted desperately to connect themselves to certain tribes, people and places. They wanted to track themselves back to Genesis...to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This obviously led to a great deal of speculation.

They were going to use the information that they received to claim that they had some status over others....particularly the Gentiles. The Church at Ephesus was a hodge podge of people from all over who were coming to understand Jesus. These Jews were likely teaching their superiority and trying to leverage it in the church. They were busy dividing what God through Paul and Timothy was trying to bring together.

One of the ways that you know someone is teaching the Word of God correctly is that they leave you challenged but without questions of what must be done.

When you have been taught the Word of God...there is not much confusion about what has been said. The challenge is in surrender and obedience. God says....here is truth...and we struggle to obey...not understand. It is clear what God wants us to do....His truth is not confusing or subtle. It doesn't leave us with much to consider other than how we are going to obey.

False teaching never does that. False teaching always leaves the door open for interpretation. False teaching is based on lies that don't carry the weight of authority. It is open for further discussion. You can have your truth and I can have mine. I think it means this...you think it means that....False teaching always leads to speculation.

The word for speculations here is unique in the Greek New Testament. It is an extension of a word meaning investigation, controversy, or discussion.

Note Rather Than....what they should be promoting instead of these myths and lies is the message given to us by Jesus Himself. Jesus message is pure and undefiled. It is perfect and does not need to be added to or retracted from. We have been given as stewards of God the responsibility to not only share the gospel but to keep it pure and unchanged. God said it and we are to believe it in faith. I say this all the time, If you have a problem with God's truth, the problem is not with Him, it is inside of you.

By its very nature...False teaching is always associated with rejection of what Jesus has taught. Some people can misunderstand God's truth and need guidance, but those who have endeavored to teach the word of God....know the truth...and have chosen to change it.

Paul is not only worried about false teaching, but he is concerned about the wasted time spent considering such foolishness. He speaks of endless speculations.....Idea after idea that has no answer....no truth...not real understanding...and no end. False teaching, spawning endless detrimental discussions, is a major factor in the deterioration of the Ephesian church.

The big problem of the Church at Ephesus is that people had influence who did not have faith....it is the same problem in every church today..... We know the gospel...We must guard it...and that means standing against those who turn it into myths and arguments.

So if false teaching is the greatest challenge facing the Church at Ephesus....and if Timothy is there to stand in the gap and command it to stop...what do you think Paul's solution would be?

I would think that the next line would be something like...So Timothy you have to make sure that you know the gospel backwards and forwards...make sure you remember every argument and have your answer ready. You need to know more than they do and be ready and skilled to shut them down with your wit, intelligence and wisdom.

You have the truth...you just need to make sure that you remember it. They are going to fight you with words...you don't want to be outgunned. False doctrine requires perfect teaching.

But that is not at all what Paul says next...let's take a look.

1 Timothy 1:4–7 (ESV) 5 The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Love? Seriously? I am being left here....charged here...given the assignment to command that all false teaching cease....and the weapon I am supposed to fight with is love. Love is all you need? Timothy likely felt like he needed more education....more experience....more help.

This is not a sentimental turn in Paul's instructions; love in Scripture is not weak emotion. To love God with all of one's heart, soul, and mind, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is always the essence of Christianity.

1 Corinthians 13:7 (ESV) 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love endures...all things....Love is everything for us.

Theologically, "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10) and the heart of the two great commandments (loving God and loving one's neighbor, Matt. 22:36–39). Love is the divinely appointed, intentional object of God's law. It is also the motivating force in God's sending of his Son (John 3:16), in our Lord's death for us (Gal. 2:20), and in our sacrificial service to him (2 Cor. 5:14).

Instead of wasting our time with these myths and speculations and genealogies, Paul tells Timothy what is worthy of His focus. Love....the summation of God's work on earth. God has a plan and a mission. That mission is pure and true and that mission is to love. But not love as humans understand it. Love that comes from within us on our own accord doesn't do much. It is fleeting. Our love is not patient, kind, forbearing, forgiving, and love originating from humans does not endure....Paul is speaking about a different kind of love.

This love...this love that endures...this love that we are commanded to use to defeat false teachers...comes from only one source....and here are it's characteristics.

Notice the list here....Love that comes from a pure heart....a good conscience....and a sincere faith.

These are not separate things...they are all linked together and come from one source, the Holy Spirit.

Another way of saying this is God's love...a love that comes from God...not some human love that is often confused with lust... God's love flows from Him, through the Holy Spirit in us and to other people. When they experience God's love they know it is coming from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith...all three together. Where ever you find those three things together...you find God. Where those are lacking...so is the truth.

This will be one of Paul's key themes in this letter to Timothy. No just fight false teaching...but demonstrate true love in contrast. Kill the false teachers with the Love

that is expressed in God's truth. Show your heart, conscience and faith so people can contrast those of these false teachers.

1) Pure Heart: The expression “pure heart” immediately calls to mind Jesus’ beatitude, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” The heart represents the total inner person in both Old and New Testaments

Paul will later tell Timothy in his second letter.

2 Timothy 2:22–23 (ESV) 22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.

Purity of heart is to will one thing.” The one thing to be willed is the love of God, and the love of God always involves the love of people. Purity of heart may also be equated with hungering and thirsting for righteousness. It is longing, above all else, to do what is pleasing to God, and thus helpful to others.

2) “a good conscience” is probably generally least understood. Conscience is an innate God-given ability to make moral judgments. It does not tell us what is right or wrong, but, on the basis of what we have been taught, it discerns whether or not a particular moral option accords what we know to be true. We are responsible to make decisions according to conscience.

A part of a good conscience is to be in touch with our failures—our inability to live up to the best that we know. Since the gospel of God’s grace has everything to do with forgiveness, we need not pretend that we have no sin. The good conscience comes not from being perfect, but from having nothing hidden from God. Our consciences can rest in God’s forgiveness in and through Jesus Christ.

And where these three—the pure heart, the good conscience, and a sincere faith—exist together in their wholeness, the result is love.

People will see God in you and me...because God is love.

3) Sincere Faith:

When Paul refers to faith as “sincere,” he is not dealing with the question of whether one has faith or not (i.e., is a believer or an unbeliever), nor is he concerned with whether one has little or great faith. It is rather a matter of whether faith is genuine or hypocritical, well-intentioned or postured. Once more he is dealing with one’s character.

A sincere faith is a faith that goes beyond concern for outward appearances. How easy it is for faith to take the form of outward profession. Such a faith is more concerned with being accepted in particular groups than it is with demonstrating a quality of life shaped by Christ

False teachers had faith...faith in themselves...what they did not have is faith that comes from God. That faith comes from deep love and is always associated with a good conscience and a pure heart.

Paradoxically those whose consciences are corrupt are the very ones who are practicing purity.....they will tell people later to avoid marriage....follow certain practices that have no connection to God's truth and no doubt congratulating themselves on their righteousness. Sincerity and having a good conscience, therefore, are both marks of the integrity that must characterize the servant of the Lord.

A Key Focus to Notice

I want to pause here for a moment and discuss a theme that is beginning to develop even this early in Paul's letter....something too critical for us to just blow past.

This is the first occurrence in the Pastoral Letters of the blend of beliefs and character, of sound beliefs and sound actions, sound doctrine and moral living, that will be developed as a major theme in the Pastoral Letters. From this point forward...what you believe should be evident in how you live your life. The truth that saturates you must be reflected in everything about your life...and your actions.

All of the theological debate in the world is never a substitute for the quality of life that flows from doctrine

What you believe, who you are and what you do...are inseparable linked by the Holy Spirit. He is expressing Himself through you..People see His love...His love, His heart, his faith...they are just coming out of you.

The integrity of the Lord's servant is both important in itself and in contrast to the lives of the false teachers, who, like their teachings, are despicable.

Servants of the Lord, including elders and deacons and their families, must not live on a moral level below that of their neighbors. Gentiles also had morals, in spite of some of the gross things they practiced, and they were quick to criticize inconsistent Christians and dismiss their teachings.

So Paul tells Timothy...our aim..our goal is love... not winning an argument...not stooping to their level...not getting down in to the spiritual mud and slinging it around with them.

If, therefore, Timothy undertakes his commission to wipe out heresy as a license to vent his anger (as some brash defenders of the faith have done throughout history), he will be like the false teachers in attitude, forgetting the "goal."

Our goal is never to win...our goal is love...because we have already won. Sometimes the best expression of love is shut down lies. So how do we actually do this? What is Paul trying to teach Timothy and us?

1 Timothy 1:4–7 (ESV) 6 Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

The niv “wandered” can be misunderstood to imply a casualness; the verb used here (astochéo) means to miss the mark, deviate, or deliberately depart from something. The heretics turned away from Christian character to empty, “meaningless” talk, a striking contrast between steadfast doing or being and empty speaking. They did to get lost because their spiritual GPS ran out of power, they purposefully departed from truth.

It is ironic that the same people whose speech is empty “want to be teachers” (v. 7) and that those who repudiate love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith want to be teachers “of the law.” The irony continues in verse 7 with the statement that they do not comprehend either what they are talking about or what they are asserting with great confidence

The word translated “teachers of the law” ... it describes the great teacher Gamaliel in Acts 5:34. The implication from that and from the context here is that these people wanted to be recognized authorities in the Old Testament, perhaps especially regarding case law applying to the Ten Commandments. Such teachers would have the heady experience of telling people what they ought or ought not to do in specific “cases” or instances.

I believe that this is a big problem in the church today. People who are not trained in the scriptures become the teachers of others. Most do not seek out a brain surgeon who never went to medical school....yet they will follow self-professed experts in Scripture who have no knowledge of God or His truth.

And they are so confident in their ignorance. They make statements that people with even a cursory understanding of the Scriptures find ridiculous.

But you know what? If you are really persuasive...if you have a lot of charisma...if you have no theological training...you can lead millions to your myths even if you come from Houston, have a massive church, a southern drawl and an XM channel.

Without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. And the sad truth is ...they don't care.

All that they care about is that you follow them. And if you don't they will change their truth hoping that you do.

Love Out Loud

We must confront and stop false teaching. It attacks the very core of our faith. These people are sent by Satan into the church to try to destroy the church. It infuriates me and honestly we spend a lot of time correcting those who don't yet understand and those who purposefully mislead. So Paul paints a dilemma for us. A contrast between those who speculate and those who know the truth. A

contrast between controversy and love for each other...How do we actually apply this in our lives today?

We are to listen carefully to teachers. The ultimate criteria by which to judge any teaching are whether it promotes the glory of God and the good of the church. The doctrine of the false teachers did neither. It promoted speculation and controversy instead. But when we see false teaching, we are not to pour out the wrath of God onto false teachers.

This exact circumstance is what started the church at Ephesus. People were teaching an incomplete gospel and Paul rather than kicking them out of town....taught them in love.

Acts 19:1–7 (ESV) 1 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all.

They responded to loving correction. Had they not...Paul would have been required to keep them from teaching....note not kick them out of the church forever. In my experience when someone truly has Satan's agenda in mind, they will leave as soon as you remove their platform.

Our response is always love even when we don't feel like it.

Paul says that our aim is love...but what I feel is betrayal and anger. I know that love covers a multitude of sins, but how do you love them and get them to stop?

The problems is our focus. Let me share with you a very key truth that we all must live by. False teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, people who speak against Jesus, who try to hurt the church, who spread lies about us and our motives.....ARE NOT OUR ENEMY.

Paul is not telling Timothy to rough them up, to publicly demolish them, to destroy them on social media. He tells Timothy...direct them to stop by loving them.

Yes, what they are doing is terrible. Yes it could impact the faith of many others. Yes we must make it stop... but they aren't doing it....Satan is doing it through them. IMAGE 1 They don't yet know Jesus and they are never going to know Him if we don't pour His love out on them.

This is how I think about all of this. I am a spiritual being having a human experience. God's Holy Spirit works through me, guides me and teaches me spiritual things that I would never otherwise have known. As a result the fruit of God pours through me to others. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness....these are not things of me...these are things of the Spirit in me.

People who don't know Jesus, whether they know it or not, are under a similar existence with Satan. He is guiding them, He is directing them, He is using them to fight a spiritual battle against Jesus. He makes them think they are in control and doing all of this on their own but they are deceived. Why do people who don't know the gospel want to teach it and have positions of authority? Because that is right where Satan wants them and needs them to be.

So let me say this again...the people who do not yet know Jesus are not your enemy. Their actions must be stopped, their false teaching corrected, their platform for influence removed....but they are not your enemy and they are not enemies of the State. You and I have been reborn in one Spirit and we have one enemy....Satan. These people who threaten the church are just pawns in a Spiritual battle....they are the captives that we are supposed to be setting free...not hating.

Think about your enemies... or people that you don't like. Maybe it is a group, Republicans, conservatives, immigrants, atheists, it doesn't matter just pick one and think about it. You are here to love them to Jesus. You are not going to win them to Christ by getting down in the mud slinging with them.

That is why I am always saying that you cannot expect people who do not yet know Jesus to act as though they do. Of course they aren't following God's laws and Scriptures....why would they? Did you before you knew Christ?

We are in a Spiritual battle but our guns are aimed at the wrong target. We never shoot down people...we love them. Every person ever born..every person you lock eyes with....Jesus died for them too.

The first thing that we must remember is that we are here now on a mission to pour out God's supernatural love on to people who you think don't deserve it.

So Paul tells Timothy...your aim is love. Love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. Sometimes Love is redirecting people back to the truth with compassion and understanding. The goal of confronting false teachers is to guide them back to the truth in love. If they will not redirect then you must take away their platform and influence. But the goal is never to destroy them as a person.

Leading the church involves two applications of the truth of God's Word. First, a solid understanding of God's word produces responsibility among those who teach. They have a stewardship to protect the gospel. Second, When the Gospel is correctly taught, it produces love among those who hear. We want to be people who inspire solid teaching of the Gospel so that God's love can set them free.

I want to close by reading a very well known Scripture from Paul....but instead of thinking about weddings where this is usually read....I want you to think about applying it to your enemies...to false teachers...to those who oppose Jesus....To those who disagree with you politically or personally .

1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (ESV) 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all

mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (ESV) 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:8–12 (ESV) 8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (ESV) 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Our aim is Love. Love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. Let's go Love out Loud. Let's Pray