

*When I was working at the Ag College, I used to do most of the practical training in boomspray operation. Before the students came to me, they'd already done the "Chemical handling" training, so they'd already been taught how to use personal protective equipment and how to take precautions so they wouldn't get **any** of any sort of chemical on themselves. But of course, when it comes to putting knowledge into practice, it's not always as easy as you might think. And they pour from a drum and it gives a bit of a glug, and it splashes back at you...*

And with most of the chemicals we were using, they were pretty safe... But sometimes we might be using something like "Paraquat" (S7)... And I would have to drum it into them – "This is really important. This is really dangerous stuff. I cannot stress how important it is, that you do not get any of this in your mouth and you don't get any of it on your skin... And more importantly, that you don't splash it on me" ...

Sometimes you just have to tell someone how really important something is, and you've gotta drum it into them, just how critical it is...

- *Kids, you do not play with snakes;*
- *Do not come anywhere near the chainsaw when it's running;*
- *Men, never agree with your wife, "Yes, you do look fat in that..."*

V1 is the equivalent of this for Paul:

4 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

Alright: Timothy, this is really, really important – **Do not** mess this up – Do not turn a blind-eye here – Make sure you do this...

And he's charging Timothy, not just before God, but before Christ Jesus, who will judge every one of us... You know, as Christians – and particularly being good protestants (as we are) we know very well about the love of God and the blessed state of being saved – this is our focus, and we might never give a thought about how Jesus is also coming as our judge.

And some folk, I suspect, may have a misplaced confidence “*I said the sinners prayer, and therefore nothing else matters*”... Oh, it matters alright. If there's one thing our Lord cannot abide, it's hypocrisy – one who claims to be Godly, but has no godliness about them.

Paul however, he has every reason to be confident. He knows that he's about to die (because of the ministry that he's carried out in the Name of The Lord Jesus Christ)... But even so, that's not the basis of his confidence:

Here's his confidence – He's:

- fought the good fight;
- finished the race;
- kept the faith

And for **that** reason, there is laid up for him, what he calls “the crown of righteousness”, which the Lord, the **righteous** judge, will award to him, on the day that Jesus comes to judge the living and the dead

And here's some good news: it's not only Paul who's going to get a crown of righteousness – you don't have to be an apostle with your name in the Bible to receive **the crown of righteousness** – It's for “all who have loved His appearing”...

Now, that's a strange phrase “all who loved His appearing”...

With the coming judgment of all humanity in view, as disciples of Jesus, **we love His appearing, don't we? We:**

- **love** it that Jesus came;
- rejoice that Jesus died for our sins;
- overjoyed that He rose from the dead;
- love it that Jesus came the first time; and
- we love it that He's coming again.

And as disciples of Jesus, it means we follow Him. We delight in His teaching, and we follow Him.

“Following Him” is the source of our purpose and enjoyment and satisfaction in life – not just because we know where we're going to end up, but because we know for whom we live... Because we know we're living for Jesus, there's our:

- purpose
- enjoyment
- satisfaction

And living the Christian life (because we love Jesus), is to:

- fight the good fight;
- finish the race;
- keep the faith

But here's the thing: not all who say they love Jesus, really love Him at all... I cannot (at the same time) love Jesus, and **not** love His teaching. I'll say that again:

I cannot (at the same time) love Jesus, and not love His teaching.

I cannot (at the same time) love Jesus, and not love His Word...

If I don't love what He taught, I don't love Him.

When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus (John 3), we all know V16 don't we:

John 3:16–21 (ESV)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. **20** For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. **21** But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

Alright, so some may say they love God, but they don't love His word, and they don't abide by his word... Why? Because they love the darkness too much.

And throughout this letter, and particularly now in this last chapter, this is what Paul's been addressing. Paul's been building his case: He's talked already about:

- those who **wrongly** handle the word of truth;
- how All Scripture is breathed-out by God – it is God's word;
- **And** back in Chapter 3, he's talked about how in the last days, wrong love (self/money/pleasure) will cause people to chase after godlessness...

And he was talking about people within the church community.

And now he says:

V³ 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.

I reckon that day is well and truly here.

What do you think about “Doctrine”. Some folk hate the thought of “Doctrine” – they feel that “doctrine” is what separates all the churches.... But “Doctrine” is simply another word for “Teaching” – it’s the body of belief – it’s what we as Christians believe. It’s what was passed down to us from Jesus and the Apostles...

And there’s only 2 types of doctrine/teaching, and it has nothing to do with “style” of teaching, and everything to do with the “content” of what is taught. And the two types of doctrine/teaching are:

- Healthy Teaching & Unhealthy teaching;
- “Sound teaching” & “Unsound teaching”

And the reason that Paul is so determined that Timothy deals with this, is because within the church itself, there is coming a time when people will not put up with sound teaching... And that day is today...

What Paul is literally saying here, is that some who claim to be Christians, can’t really put up with sound biblical teaching for very long – they find it intolerable...

And because they find sound biblical teaching intolerable, what do they do? They haven’t loved the light – they love

darkness... And so they seek out other teaching – they seek out teaching that will affirm what their sinful cravings desire. And there's plenty of that on offer.

Now, to me, that's a bit like having a car that the temperature gauge is up in the red (running too hot). But rather than cleaning out your radiator, you buy a gauge that reads a bit cooler and tells you it's all ok...

It tells me that everything's OK, but everything isn't OK...

What things do we crave, that are contrary to God's word?

Back in chapter 3, he talked about having a “**wrong love**” (**self/money/pleasure**). And when we **love** the wrong thing, that's when we find sound teaching intolerable.

E.G. Let's talk about having a **love of self**.

We live in a world that promotes:

- self-assurance;
- self-esteem;
- self-reliance;
- self-confidence;
- self-love;
- self-care;
- self-determination

Paul's confidence in Christ, isn't about self. He's:

- fought the good fight;
- finished the race;
- kept the faith

The faith, is sound teaching/doctrine.

Now, sound Gospel doctrine is actually offensive to “self”. It teaches that the way to salvation is to repent of sin, believe in the Lord Jesus, and surrender our whole selves to Him. And in His mercy, and by His grace, He forgives us... It’s about putting to death the old man (along with all of our sinful ways) and raising up the new, to live a life of holiness and righteousness in the Lord and for our Lord...

And sound biblical teaching talks a lot about this – turning away from our old fleshly ways...

And as disciples of Jesus, we will be challenged over and over again. Basically the message is, I was a dirty rotten scoundrel. I didn’t deserve to be saved, but in His mercy, he took me who was totally undeserving, and saved me...

But the problem is, many folk don’t want to hear that. The true Gospel is offensive.

A friend of mine, who himself is a pastor, told me once that someone in his congregation confronted him,

“You talk too much about ‘sin’. We don’t need to hear about sin.”

But he kept teaching sound biblical doctrine. And they tried to stick it out for a while, but they found they couldn’t. For them, sound biblical teaching was intolerable – they could only put up with it for so long. And so they moved to a church where presumably they got to hear what affirms them and their sinfulness instead of revealing sin for what it is.

And there's plenty of unhealthy doctrine that will cater for that. In some of the biggest, fastest growing churches, they'll never talk about sin. The age-old gospel gets put aside, because nobody wants to hear that. And they preach a different Gospel – they remove the offence of the Gospel: "You're so wonderful – God can't bear to be without you..."
Come and be set free. Be set free from:

- your past hurt;
- your brokenness;
- addictions;

You see, this new message very much appeals to a person's pride – This is stuff that was done to me, or it's a sickness that I have. But the sound, healthy Gospel presents it quite bluntly: My sin, was all entirely my fault – it's nobody else's... I can't blame it on my circumstances/parents/society/genetic makeup...

The fact of the matter is "I am evil, and I need to repent of this evil, so that God can make me good..." And that's the miracle of God

What about the **love of money** and wealth and possessions

The Scriptures teach us **not** to crave such things, but the flesh **does** crave them. The Scriptures teach us to give generously – store up treasures in heaven – don't accumulate more assets and possessions here on earth... But that's not what the flesh wants to hear... That doesn't appeal to a person's wrong love (love of money)...

And some, because of their love of money/possessions/wealth, will not tolerate sound teaching... And so, when The Word of God is rightly taught, and it just makes them want to squirm in their seat when Jesus says:

Luke 6:24–25 (ESV)

24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

Owww,,,

How can they ease their conscience?? Well, lucky for them, there’s plenty of teachers who are willing to “tickle their ears” – they’ll tell them just what they want to hear.

God wants you to be rich/bless you/prosper/person of influence...

And now, the prosperity gospel is being taught far and wide, and it’s so appealing. Why? Because it appeals to a person’s love of money, wealth and possessions...

What about the **love of pleasure?**

Even within this very letter of 2 Timothy, we are told that **12 ...all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.** We are told that we will share in

suffering, for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel... Jesus told His disciples, you will be persecuted for my sake...

But when one has a love of pleasure, “suffering” doesn’t fit one’s theology does it???

And so they tune out from listening to sound teaching, and they seek out and tune in to teaching that panders to their love of pleasure...

- You **will** be safe;
- You **will** be healed;
- You **won’t** be harmed;
- It won’t be hard;

And of course, that very pleasurable teaching that says:

- God only wants you to serve Him in areas that you’re passionate about... If you want to do it, God wants you to do it...

Teaching that appeals to a love of pleasure.

And when you’ve got it bad, one teacher is never enough...

Have you noticed this? When a person can’t put up with sound biblical teaching – when they can’t tolerate the pressure of what God’s word is telling them, it only takes one teacher to make them cringe,,,,, But to give themselves a sense of “self-justification” (Yeah, I was right to turn away from that teaching), they accumulate (heap up) – **heaps** of teachers who will tickle their ears, and tell them, what suits their cravings...

God wants to bless you; make you rich; be a leader; person of influence; you're going to be so amazing; and life is going to be so wonderful....

And today like never before, (thanks to the internet and international celebrity preachers), it's easy to accumulate/heap up the teaching that one **wants** to hear... And teacher after teacher after teacher keep regurgitating the same unsound teaching...

And so people will turn their ear away from listening to the truth, and they'll wander off into what Paul calls "myths", (not true / not historical / lack reality)...

Righto, so how critical is this? You might say to me, "Michael, we're just talking about people believing a few different things – it's all OK." But it's not OK...

It's actually pretty devastating. Paul has bracketed this (beginning and end) by reminding us that Jesus is coming as our judge... And the consequence of not putting up with the truth, is wandering off into what is **not** true... And in some cases, that can lead to a faith that is so corrupted, it's not "**the** faith" at all.

Having "**a** faith" is never going to save anyone. Having a **corrupt** faith that rejects Christ and His word, and embraces lies, and causes us to embrace **ungodliness** and live in **unrighteousness**, isn't going to save anyone...

If you wander off, you do not finish the race. Remember where Paul's confidence is?

I have:

- fought the good fight;
- finished the race;
- kept the faith

When one heaps up unsound teachers to satisfy their cravings, they've:

- given up the fight;
- wandered off – they're not going to finish the race; and
- they couldn't tolerate listening to sound teaching, and so they've rejected **the** faith – they haven't kept it...

And that is why Paul is drumming it into Timothy... *It was like me drumming it into those spraying students – do not be careless with this stuff – it'll kill you...*

So, what's Timothy's role? What should he do??? Well, if you've been following on in your Bible, you've probably noticed that I skipped over V2, and that's where we're coming back to now:

Paul's word to Timothy, as the pastor of that church, is this is really really important: Because people **won't** put up with sound doctrine, and because the time is coming when they **will** accumulate for themselves a great big heap of teachers who will overwhelmingly tell them exactly what their itching fleshly ears want to hear, Timothy:

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

preach the word

My job, is not to tell you what your itching ears want to hear. The job of a preacher, is to preach and teach sound doctrine – to teach exactly what God’s word says, no matter how hard that word might be...

be ready in season and out of season

Sometimes, sharing God’s word, will come at the most inconvenient moment. It might be in the middle of the footy grand final. So what – leave your telly and make yourself available for God...

Now, the next bit, most people don’t like it when their pastors do this:

reprove, rebuke, and exhort

Do you know what that means? It means when a person has departed from sound doctrine, the preacher’s probably going to hurt their feelings, but he needs to come to them and say, “You have departed from the faith – You love the wrong thing – Your love of self/money/pleasure has led you to believe lies...”

To **reprove, rebuke** means to tell them

- “It’s wrong”
- it’s **not** OK.
- let them know their current beliefs are ungodly

and to **exhort**, means to urge them on, to reject unsound doctrine, and to return to the solid godly truth...

That's what a pastor needs to do ² **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort**

And we have to keep on doing it. That's what he means **with complete patience and teaching**. The word for "patience" is μακροθυμία (makrothymia), which means long suffering... This isn't an easy thing for a Pastor to do – to reprove and rebuke...

But the job of a pastor isn't just to tell people what that pastor thinks – it's to teach the word... We reprove and rebuke with the word...

Now, not many people will put up with a pastor who 'chips them' when they're wrong – not when they can find 100 others who will affirm them in what they want to believe... But we only appeal to God's word, and that's the only trustworthy word on the matter

And Paul is telling Timothy, "This is so important, it must be done..."

V

⁵ **As for you, always be sober-minded,**
(well balanced; self-controlled; keep your wits about you)

endure suffering,

It was a tough job for Timothy, being a Pastor and trying to teach the truth when some didn't want to hear the truth... And he was going to suffer... *And for me, in my experience, the biggest sufferings that I've had in the church, is when I've had to reprove and rebuke and exhort...*

But Paul says, "Timothy", **do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

Some within the church, may wander off into Myths – they may even be lost completely... But for the sake of those who are yet to hear the Gospel, the Gospel must continue to **be** the Gospel... Pure; Holy, as God's word presents it...

Because this is the source of life.

So, my word to you today, is "it matters". What we believe, matters....

Let's:

- Fight the good fight;
- Finish the Race;
- Keep the faith...

And this is how we remain ready for when Jesus returns...

Let's pray,

Oh Heavenly Father,

we repent of wrong love.

Love of self/money/pleasure.

Lord, forgive us
for when we've let that wrong love
twist our reading of Scripture,
to try and justify our own worldly desires.

Lord, give us a passion for Your word.
May we embrace sound teaching,
and reject corrupt teaching.
And give us the wisdom to know the difference.

And Lord, give us the stamina, to

- Fight the good fight;
- Finish the Race;
- Keep the faith...

in Jesus' Name,
Amen.