

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 TIMOTHY 1 (PART 3)

WE KNOW THAT PAUL'S PURPOSE FOR WRITING TO TIMOTHY WAS OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE LIFE AND HEALTH OF THE CHURCH. TIMOTHY IS TASKED WITH CONFRONTING THOSE TEACHING THOSE THINGS NOT IN LINE WITH PAUL'S APOSTOLIC INSTRUCTION. THINGS HAVE GOTTEN OFF TRACK IN THE CHURCH (LIKELY EPHEBUS) AND TIMOTHY IS TASKED WITH ADDRESSING SOME OF THESE ISSUES HEAD ON. NOT AN EASY TASK. TODAY WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT TWO MAIN THEMES. FIRST, THE ROLE OF THE PROPHETIC IN THE LIFE OF THE EARLY CHURCH AND SECOND, THE ROLE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH.

1 TIMOTHY 1:18-20 - NAMING NAMES

V. 18 - PROPHETIC WEAPONRY - "THIS COMMAND" IS PROBABLY REFERRING TO THE PREVIOUS CALL FROM PAUL THAT TIMOTHY REMAIN IN EPHEBUS TO "INSTRUCT CERTAIN MEN TO NOT TEACH STRANGE DOCTRINES (1:5)"

PAUL TRUSTS THAT TIMOTHY IS CAPABLE TO DO THE LORD'S WORK AND ENCOURAGES HIM BY REMINDING HIM ABOUT THE "PROPHECIES PREVIOUSLY MADE (1:19)", PERHAPS AT HIS ORDINATION, WHICH WOULD GIVE TIMOTHY CONFIDENCE THAT THE LORD IS WITH HIM.

THIS IS AN INTERESTING WINDOW INTO THE EARLY CHURCH'S VIEW ON PROPHETIC UTTERANCES AS WELL AS THE PLACE THAT GOD'S WORD HOLDS IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER TO BRING ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE MINISTRY.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS:

- AT SOME POINT IN TIMOTHY'S LIFE, (PERHAPS AT HIS ORDINATION, CP. 1 TIMOTHY 4:14), WORDS OF PROPHECY WERE SPOKEN TO/OVER HIM.
- PROPHECY IS A WORD USED TO SPEAK OF INSPIRED WORDS SPOKEN FROM GOD. SOMETIMES PROPHECY IS A WORD FROM GOD ABOUT THE FUTURE, BUT ALSO IT IS A WORD FROM GOD IN GENERAL.
- IF TIMOTHY (OR ANYONE) WOULD LISTEN TO THESE WORDS AND BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE FROM GOD, THEN THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD COULD BE UNLEASHED UPON THEIR HEART AND LIFE. PAUL SAYS TO TIMOTHY "BY THEM (THE PROPHETIC WORDS), YOU CAN "FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT" (V. 18)

IN THIS CASE, TIMOTHY HAD A POTENTIALLY DIFFICULT TASK OF CONFRONTING CHARISMATIC TEACHERS WHO WERE TEACHING WRONGLY. THESE TEACHERS MIGHT HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN TIMOTHY, MORE LEARNED IN THE SCRIPTURES THAN TIMOTHY OR PRONE TO ANGER WHEN GIVEN CRITICISM - FOR TIMOTHY TO BELIEVE THAT GOD WAS WITH HIM AND WOULD WORK THROUGH HIM WOULD HAVE PROVED INVALUABLE AND SO PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY TO NOT JUST REMEMBER THE GENERAL PROMISES OF GOD BUT TO SPECIFICALLY REMEMBER THE WORDS/PROMISES OF GOD SPOKEN TO AND ABOUT TIMOTHY'S LIFE AND MINISTRY.

THE EARLY CHURCH HAD AN ACTIVE PROPHETIC MINISTRY AS WELL AS AN EXPECTATION/BELIEF THAT GOD WAS SPEAKING TO HIS PEOPLE.

Q - WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS? WHAT PLACE DOES PROPHECY HAVE IN THE CHURCH TODAY?

Q - CAN YOU SPEAK OF THE POWER THAT BELIEVING WHAT GOD SAYS HAS IN YOUR LIFE AS A BELIEVER?

V. 19-20 - "SHIPWRECK IN REGARD TO THEIR FAITH"

IF TIMOTHY WILL REMAIN FAITHFUL TO WHAT GOD HAS SAID, HE WILL DO WELL. HE ALSO IS TOLD TO KEEP A "GOOD CONSCIENCE". GOD HAS GIVEN US A CONSCIENCE TO SERVE AS A SORT OF GUIDE TO RIGHT/WRONG. IT'S THAT INTERNAL ALARM THAT TELLS EVEN AS CHILDREN THAT LYING OR STEALING ARE WRONG AND THAT WE SHOULD FEEL BAD IF WE DO THOSE THINGS. BUT AS WE GROW, WE OFTEN BEGIN TO IGNORE THOSE PROMPTINGS FROM GOD AND TURN OFF THE ALARMS, ALLOWING US TO PRACTICE SINFUL BEHAVIORS AND IGNORE BAD FEELINGS. IN THIS CASE, PAUL TELLS TIMOTHY TO KEEP A GOOD CONSCIENCE IN HIS WORK, BECAUSE THIS IS NOT WHAT OTHERS HAVE DONE. AND THEN HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS TWO PEOPLE, **HYMENAEOUS** AND **ALEXANDER**, WHO PRESUMABLY WERE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS (PERHAPS EVEN LEADERS) BUT DID NOT KEEP A GOOD CONSCIENCE AND HAVE GOTTEN "SHIPWRECKED IN REGARD TO THEIR FAITH (V. 19)"

HYMENAEOUS & ALEXANDER: WE DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHO THESE TWO ARE BUT WE KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT THEM FROM PAUL'S WRITINGS. THEY ARE BOTH MENTIONED HERE AND AGAIN IN 2 TIMOTHY:

2 TIMOTHY 2:16-18 - BUT AVOID WORLDLY AND EMPTY CHATTER, FOR IT WILL LEAD TO FURTHER UNGODLINESS, 17 AND THEIR TALK WILL SPREAD LIKE GANGRENE. AMONG THEM ARE **HYMENAEOUS** AND **PHILETUS**, 18 MEN WHO HAVE GONE ASTRAY FROM THE TRUTH SAYING THAT THE RESURRECTION HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE, AND THEY UPSET THE FAITH OF SOME.

2 TIMOTHY 4:14 - **ALEXANDER** THE COPPERSMITH DID ME MUCH HARM; THE LORD WILL REPAY HIM ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

Q - WHAT CAN YOU TAKE AWAY ABOUT HYMENAEOUS AND ALEXANDER FROM THESE DESCRIPTIONS?

A FEW KEY TERMS:

V. 19 - *SUFFERED SHIPWRECK* - <3489> **ναυαγέω** NAV-AGEO - IS A COMPOUND WORD DESCRIBING A SHIP/VESSEL BREAKING APART. IT IS USED ONE OTHER TIME IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHERE PAUL IS RECOUNTING A LITERAL SHIPWRECK HE EXPERIENCED (2 COR. 11:25)

V. 20 - *HANDED OVER (TO SATAN)* - <3860> **παραδίδωμι** PARA-DIDOMI - SPEAKS TO SOMEONE BEING HANDED OVER OR BETRAYED. IN THIS USAGE PAUL IS SPEAKING OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE - IN OTHER WORDS, RATHER THAN THESE INDIVIDUALS AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, BEING LED BY CHRIST, THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN INTO SATAN'S CUSTODY TO EXPERIENCE WHAT LIFE IS LIKE UNDER HIS RULE INSTEAD. PAUL USES THIS PHRASE ONE OTHER TIME:

1 CORINTHIANS 5:5 - I HAVE DECIDED TO DELIVER SUCH A ONE TO SATAN FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS FLESH, SO THAT HIS SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS.

HERE IS THE FULLER CONTEXT:

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5 (NLT) - I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THE REPORT ABOUT THE SEXUAL IMMORALITY GOING ON AMONG YOU-- SOMETHING THAT EVEN PAGANS DON'T DO. I AM TOLD THAT A MAN IN YOUR CHURCH IS LIVING IN SIN WITH HIS STEPMOTHER. 2 YOU ARE SO PROUD OF YOURSELVES, BUT YOU SHOULD BE MOURNING IN SORROW AND SHAME. AND YOU SHOULD REMOVE THIS MAN FROM YOUR FELLOWSHIP.

3 EVEN THOUGH I AM NOT WITH YOU IN PERSON, I AM WITH YOU IN THE SPIRIT. AND AS THOUGH I WERE THERE, I HAVE ALREADY PASSED JUDGMENT ON THIS MAN 4 IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS. YOU MUST CALL A MEETING OF THE CHURCH. I WILL BE PRESENT WITH YOU

IN SPIRIT, AND SO WILL THE POWER OF OUR LORD JESUS. 5 THEN YOU MUST THROW THIS MAN OUT AND HAND HIM OVER TO SATAN SO THAT HIS SINFUL NATURE WILL BE DESTROYED AND HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED ON THE DAY THE LORD RETURNS.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-13 (NLT) - WHEN I WROTE TO YOU BEFORE, I TOLD YOU NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH PEOPLE WHO INDULGE IN SEXUAL SIN.¹⁰ BUT I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT UNBELIEVERS WHO INDULGE IN SEXUAL SIN, OR ARE GREEDY, OR CHEAT PEOPLE, OR WORSHIP IDOLS. YOU WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THIS WORLD TO AVOID PEOPLE LIKE THAT. ¹¹ I MEANT THAT YOU ARE NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH ANYONE WHO CLAIMS TO BE A BELIEVER YET INDULGES IN SEXUAL SIN, OR IS GREEDY, OR WORSHIPS IDOLS, OR IS ABUSIVE, OR IS A DRUNKARD, OR CHEATS PEOPLE. DON'T EVEN EAT WITH SUCH PEOPLE.

¹² IT ISN'T MY RESPONSIBILITY TO JUDGE OUTSIDERS, BUT IT CERTAINLY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO JUDGE THOSE INSIDE THE CHURCH WHO ARE SINNING. ¹³ GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE ON THE OUTSIDE; BUT AS THE SCRIPTURES SAY, "YOU MUST REMOVE THE EVIL PERSON FROM AMONG YOU."

THERE ARE INSTANCES WHEN AFTER PRAYER AND LOVING AND GODLY CONFRONTATION AND APPEAL WHEN THE RIGHT DECISION FOR THE PROTECTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND THE SALVATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL PERSON IS TO BE REMOVED FROM THE CHURCH COMMUNITY. REASONS FOR THIS WOULD BE FOR HABITUAL UNREPENTED SIN AND FALSE TEACHING, NOT JUST FOR TRIVIAL THINGS LIKE PERSONAL PREFERENCES. THIS IS DONE WITH RELUCTANCE AND FEAR BUT ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTIVE OF JESUS HIMSELF:

MATTHEW 18:15-17 - "IF YOUR BROTHER SINS, GO AND SHOW HIM HIS FAULT IN PRIVATE; IF HE LISTENS TO YOU, YOU HAVE WON YOUR BROTHER. ¹⁶ "BUT IF HE DOES NOT LISTEN TO YOU, TAKE ONE OR TWO MORE WITH YOU, SO THAT BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. ¹⁷ "IF HE REFUSES TO LISTEN TO THEM, TELL IT TO THE CHURCH; AND IF HE REFUSES TO LISTEN EVEN TO THE CHURCH, LET HIM BE TO YOU AS A GENTILE AND A TAX COLLECTOR.

THERE'S MORE WE COULD DISCUSS ON THIS MATTER, BUT FOR NOW WE CAN SEE THAT THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS PRACTICED BY PAUL AND THE EARLY CHURCH. BUT THE REASON FOR THIS IS EXPLAINED BY PAUL HIMSELF IN THIS SECTION.

V. 20 - TAUGHT - <3811> **παιδεύω** PAID-EVO - WHICH MEANS TO TRAIN A CHILD. THE GOAL OF THIS IS FOR SOMEONE TO GROW AND CORRECT THE WRONG.

V. 20 - BLASPHEME - <987> **βλασφημέω** BLASPHEMEO - TO SPEAK LIGHTLY OR PROFANE ABOUT SACRED THINGS

HERE IS THE ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTE ON THESE WORDS: "IF THE FALSE TEACHERS REPENT, THEY MAY STILL BE SAVED; CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS MOTIVATED BY LOVE, WITH THE HOPE THAT THE ONE DISCIPLINED WILL TURN BACK TO THE LORD. THERE IS NO EXPLICIT INDICATION THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS DIRECTLY UTTERED EVIL STATEMENTS ABOUT GOD ("BLASPHEMED"). HOWEVER, TO MISREPRESENT GOD'S TRUTH IS TO SPEAK ILL OF HIM."

WHEN DO WE NAME NAMES AND HOW?

EARLIER IN THE CHAPTER PAUL HIGHLIGHTS THE WRONG TEACHING, BUT DOESN'T NAME THE WRONG TEACHERS. AND NOW HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS HYMENAEUS AND ALEXANDER *BY NAME!*

Q - WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?

I THINK THERE IS A PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY (AS WELL AS ALL CHRISTIANS) TO HIGHLIGHT AND CORRECT WRONG TEACHING. THIS IS IMPORTANT. IF PASTORS ARE COMPARABLE TO SHEPHERDS, THEY OUGHT TO CARE FOR THEIR FLOCKS WHICH INCLUDES LEADING THEM AND FEEDING THEM AND ALSO WATCHING OUT FOR THREATS TO THEIR WELL BEING. BUT I ALSO THINK THAT IN THIS INSTANCE, THE SPECIFIC TEACHER IS SECONDARY TO THE TEACHING. IF YOU CAN LEARN WHAT A WOLF LOOKS LIKE, SOUNDS LIKE, SMELLS LIKE, THEN YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SPOT THEM, EVEN IF THEY ARE DRESSED UP SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY.

BUT THERE IS ALSO A PLACE, ESPECIALLY AMONG CHURCH ELDERS, TO SPECIFICALLY HIGHLIGHT CERTAIN PEOPLE BY NAME - WHICH IS WHAT PAUL DOES HERE TO A LETTER WRITTEN TO TIMOTHY (HIS MAN ON THE GROUND). AND IN A CERTAIN WAY AND IN A CERTAIN CONTEXT THIS SERVES AN IMPORTANT PURPOSE FOR THE CARE OF THE SHEEP. RIDICULING OR MOCKING OR SPEAKING EVIL ABOUT ANOTHER CHRISTIAN IS NEVER APPROPRIATE.

LET'S BE SURE TO HONOR OTHER PEOPLE, CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE, EVEN WHEN WE DISAGREE WITH THEM. LET'S PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TURNED AWAY FROM GOD AND HIS TRUTH TO COME BACK AND SEE HIS GOODNESS AND HIS WAY.

THE EARLY CHURCH WAS NOT SOME MASSIVE BODY WITH NUMBERS AND STATS - IT WAS A FAMILY WITH KNOWN NAMES AND FACES. THIS SERVED AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST EVIL AND ALSO HELPED CARE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE CHURCH COMMUNITY. WHEN SOMEONE WAS OFF TRACK, IT WAS NOTICED AND KNOWN. WHEN SOMEONE WAS IN NEED, IT WAS NOTICED AND KNOWN.

SADLY, IF A MODERN DAY CHRISTIAN IS CONFRONTED WITH A SIN BY A BROTHER/SISTER OR AN ELDER AND THEY AREN'T HUMBLE OR HAPPY ABOUT IT, THEY CAN JUST GO TO THE CHURCH ACROSS TOWN. NOT SO IN THE EARLY CHURCH. CHURCH DISCIPLINE HAD AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE LIFE AND HEALTH OF THE CHURCH BODY. THIS IS NOT AN EASY SITUATION...BUT THERE IS GOOD IN IT. THESE ARE HARD THINGS, BUT IMPORTANT THINGS ARE OFTEN HARD.

JAMES 5:19-20 - MY BRETHREN, IF ANY AMONG YOU STRAYS FROM THE TRUTH AND ONE TURNS HIM BACK, SO LET HIM KNOW THAT HE WHO TURNS A SINNER FROM THE ERROR OF HIS WAY WILL SAVE HIS SOUL FROM DEATH AND WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS.