

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

St. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to lead the church there. Paul writes “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.” That is the right use of the Law. But the Law is being wrongly taught.

So with his Epistle, Paul charges Timothy to command some in Ephesus to stop teaching false doctrine. It is a charge that each of us ought hear and heed. False doctrine is no small thing. It is no adiaphoron. It is the stuff of the serpent in the garden.

What is this false doctrine? “...idle talk,” and “desiring to be teachers of the law.” The problem, writes St. Paul, is that because the self-made teachers do not understand the Law, they cannot understand the Gospel. The law is good if one uses the law rightly.

But taught wrongly, taught as the so-called Evangelicals and moderns teach it, although it is God’s Word it is twisted into false doctrine. To teach righteousness attained by the keeping of the Law is to teach false doctrine

The Law is for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, and the horrible list goes on.

So the law is - for each of us. For according to the old man in each of us, spurred on by the devil, the flesh and the world, our

lawlessness has been quite evident. And even if you have been able to restrain your outward behavior, you know your secret thoughts and your desires. And if the sinful yearnings of your heart were to be expressed through your mouth and hands, you would be a criminal, and adulterer, an idolater, a murderer. Before men harboring such thoughts in your heart is not against the law. But before God harboring such thoughts breaks the commandments just as surely as acting on them.

So regardless of men’s’ attempts to teach and use it wrongly, the Law does what God gave it to do. Man’s misunderstanding and sinful twisting of God’s Word doesn’t change the Word, nor does it change God’s will – the Law still shows that you have been lawless and insubordinate, ungodly, a sinner. And the Law is not polite. It does not mince words. It proclaims that all sinners merit death.

Do you suppose that the Galileans and those in Siloam were worse sinners than all other men? Hear the Word of Christ: “...unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

But against the teachers of such false doctrine, St. Paul writes to St. Timothy of sound doctrine. And sound doctrine is this – that we are saved by Christ, not by the works of the Law. That is the Gospel that the Apostle calls “glorious.” And in this eternal truth there is great hope for you. For the Law treasured up in the Ark of the Covenant was kept by the One who dwelt above it on the Mercy Seat. And that He did from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.

The Gospel is God's loving Gift to those perishing, freedom for those chained by sin, and hope for those burdened by their sins. Christ's forgiveness isn't earned or won or purchased by men. He earned it, but freely gives it to sinners that they be proclaimed saints. And this by the sincere faith that Paul describes.

So does the God before whom even the demons must fall down and worship call and send heralds of this glorious Gospel of the blessed God, that the Promises of God be made yours. The twelve were sent out to preach. They had power over sickness and demons, but their vocation was to preach. For faith comes by hearing, hearing the very Word of forgiveness and life that you hear this day.

The Blood of Christ crucified drips from every Word of the Apostle Paul's Epistle to Bishop Timothy. For the Blood of Christ is the source and currency of salvation. And so as He bids you drink that Blood today, He does so to you, His faithful, those freed from the Law by His Blood, those in whom the Gospel Promise of forgiveness and life creates the very faith it requires, faith that by the Holy Spirit brings forth works pleasing to God.

The grace of our Lord is exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are yours in Christ Jesus.

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