

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: November 22, 2017 - Thanksgiving Eve

Sermon Title: Everything Created by God is Good - Why Jesus Matters

Sermon Series: First Timothy

Text: 1 Tim. 4:1-5

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

Date: Thanksgiving Eve - 2017
Title: Everything Created by God is Good – Why Jesus Matters
Text: 1 Tim. 4:1-5
Theme: If we do not keep the gospel central, we will become enslaved by the shadow in our pursuit of a counterfeit expression of the Christian life. We need to see the shadow for what it is. Shadow is God’s means of His people tasting and seeing that He is good. Shadow can only point, it can never provide.

Introduction:

The error is prevalent and powerful. It is leading the local church back into bondage and keeping the people of God from the freedom secured by Christ Jesus. What solution does Paul offer to such a foreboding threat? What profound answer does Paul give to this most perplexing problem? Listen carefully to response, ³“God has created [marriage and food] to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.” Huh? This is not what one might expect, but it is true. The gospel enables those who believe and know the truth to joyfully participate in marriage and eating. For anyone to teach otherwise is another gospel. Let us unpack this idea further in our present text and discover why Jesus matters even in how we approach and appropriate the created order.

In our study of 1 Timothy we have encountered a “strange teaching.” This teaching is not a gospel. It is not good news. Such teaching sounds good initially [Why? Because it tells us what to do and makes us believe we control or have power over our Christian life], but will either keep the hearer in bondage or lead them back into bondage. This strange teaching appears to focus on a misapplication of the law (1:3-11). One of the elements of this strange teaching is found in 4:3 where adherences are told to either abstain from marriage altogether or abstaining from certain foods. There seems to be this fixation on the physical, the shadow as a means of gaining godliness. This emphasis on one’s works as a means of attaining personal “holiness” or standing before God is referred to as work’s righteousness. Such words as moralism or legalism are also appropriate synonyms. Nonetheless, what is work’s righteousness or moralism? Simply put, works-righteousness believes one can merit either God’s pleasure or displeasure by one’s activity or non-activity. This fixation expresses itself either by over indulgence or over abstinence. Notice several other passages in Timothy where this idea is prominent and emphasis is made on the physical.

- ⁶“But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸**If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content** [same word in 1 Tim. 6:8]. ⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Tim. 6:6-10).
- ¹⁷“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, **who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy**. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed” (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Somehow this misapplication of Law in the believing is in the arena of work's righteousness. The false teachers leverage the law through rules and regulations as a means of gaining personal godliness and standing before God. As a side note, one of the tensions we have is, "How do we in a world gone mad, learn contentment with what we have? When is enough, enough? How do we live well in a world of gluttony or even poverty?" Especially when, "One person's poverty is another person's prosperity."

One might ask themselves to what end is such teaching? Why would one abstain either from marriage or certain foods? It is suggested that the application is in personal holiness. How did one come to this conclusion? It appears the application of this counterfeit idea is in the pursuit of personal godliness. Let us pause for a moment and note the word "godliness" as it occurs in the New Testament. **The word occurs 15 times in the New Testament. Eleven of those occurrences are in the pastorals and eight of those are in 1 Timothy.** When we say someone is godly, what do we mean by this and is what we mean the same thing as to what the Bible means? We mean someone's behavior is good or godlike. In Timothy, it speaks of the gospel fruit that comes from the JESUS SEED. Godliness is the gospel. If we were to replace the word godliness with gospel, the text would read with clarity. There is no godliness apart from the gospel. This text tells us that what the false teachers teach is not godliness or righteousness, but bad news and leads to bondage. How do we avoid this strange teaching that twists and distorts the good creation of God into something He never intended it to be?

Let us note four simple thoughts as we follow the flow of this text.

THE BIG PICTURE:

Outline:

- I. The cause or source behind work's righteousness (v. 1)
 - ¹"But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,"

In typical Pauline expression, Paul pulls no punches and lays down the true cause of such strange teaching.

In a world of proposed religious pluralism, moral tolerance, and political correctness, it seems so harsh to identify this strange teaching as caused by deceitful spirits and as the doctrines of demons. Yet this is exactly what Paul does. He sees such teaching as a dismissal of the gospel. Therefore, he sees it for what it is, "the doctrines of demons." Such teaching does not lead men and women out of sin and death, but into sin and death.

The tragedy of such teaching is the seemingly wide spread acceptance and propagation of this error within Christianity and evangelicalism. What you and I do will never gain or maintain godliness. Only Jesus in His person and work gains and maintains for His people their standing

before the Father. Nothing else and no one else can do for us what He did and does. **Unfortunately, this message of "Jesus is enough" is counter-cultural and counter-intuitive. Why is this so? First, the natural man will not think gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-25; 2:2). Second, the natural man rejects the cross (Mark 8:27-38).**

Notice with me a consequence of this strange teaching as played out in verse 2.

II. The consequence or symptoms of work's righteousness (v. 2)

- ²"by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,"

The false teachers who teach these things and those who hold to such teaching are liars and hypocrites and have their conscience seared shut. **What they are their adherence become.** It is for this reason Paul calls Timothy to be an example (4:12) and to pay close attention to himself (4:16).

The end of this searing is a falling away from the faith. This idea is repeated throughout 1 Timothy. It is so real. Listen carefully to the following statements.

- "For some men, **straying from these things, have turned aside** to fruitless discussion" (1 Tim. 1:6).
- "keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith" (1 Tim. 1:19).
- "For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, **I am not lying**) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Tim. 2:7).
 - Paul was accused of being a liar as it relates to the gospel. Notice the continued emphasis on the gospel throughout 1 Timothy (1:15; 2:3-6; 3:16; 4:10). Notice as well the contrast between 2:7 and 4:2. The "true" liars and hypocrites are the false teachers.
- "Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; 15 **for some have already turned aside to follow Satan**" (1 Tim. 5:14).
- "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and **some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs**" (1 Tim. 6:10).
- "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge" -- 21 which some have professed and **thus gone astray from the faith.** Grace be with you" (1 Tim. 6:20).

The threat is constant and real. The strange teaching has the power to cauterize the conscience and brand or mark the recipient. If the threat was real in the first century church, why do we think it is not any less real now?

The troubling thing in all of this is the appearance or show it makes. Yet Colossians is clear.

- ²⁰"If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ²¹ **Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!** ²² (which

all refer to things destined to perish with use) --in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? ²³ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, **but are of no value against fleshly indulgence**" (Col. 2:20-23).

We look at such people and believe they are godly or holy or righteous. But they are diabolical, dark, and damned. The means of measuring godliness is not our work, but His. The Bible is less about our work for Him and more about His work for us.

What is the strange teaching?

III. The content or substance of work's righteousness (v. 3a)

- ³ "men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods"

Here, Paul notes 2 or 3 "rules" taught by the false teachers. Paul's argument is to avoid two extremes. Guard against over-indulgence and over-abstinence and in contrast simply enjoy God's good creation with gratitude.

Paul will write to Titus that the gospel teaches us to deny our ungodly lusts. But our rejection of sinful temptations is not the gospel. The rejection is the fruit or work the gospel does in the life of its recipients. What is Paul's correction or solution to this false teaching?

- ¹¹ "**For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness** [i.e. the negative with godliness] **and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,** ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. ¹⁵ These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you" (Titus 2:11-15).

How do we counter this strange teaching? We counter strange teaching by receiving and enjoying God's creation with gratitude and thanksgiving. What Paul focuses on is application. How are we to respond to such teaching?

IV. The correction or solution to work's righteousness (vv. 3b-5)

How does Paul go about correcting strange teaching? The correction is found in the gospel.

- ^{3b} "which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:3b-5).

Three actions are noted.

A. Everything created by God is good (v. 4a).

Specifically, he identifies two good things created by God: marriage and eating. God created this for our enjoyment, for our joy.

B. Everything created by God that is good is to be enjoyed by His people (v. 3b)

These two things are to be enjoyed and celebrated in community. Neither one is to be done in isolation.

C. Everything created by God that is good is to be received with gratitude (vv. 4b, 5).

Paul uses the word **eucharist** three times in 1 Timothy (2:1; 4:3, 4). Notice two familiar verses.

- ¹⁶ “Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ **in everything give thanks**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹ But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:16-22).
- ¹⁷ “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰ **always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God**, even the Father; ²¹ and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Eph. 5:17-21).

How are we to look at marriage, the marriage bed, and food? We are to receive them with gratitude as good gifts from God.

Paul's thoughts of “nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of,” reflects his thoughts in 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14.

- ⁷ “However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. ⁸ **But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat**” (1 Cor. 8:7, 8).
- ¹⁴ “I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵ For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷ **for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**” (Rom. 14:14-17).

Some people will stumble according to 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14. Paul's point in both is such “things” do not matter in the vertical. They only matter in the horizontal.

Paul refutes every point the false teachers stressed as a means of acquiring righteousness or godliness before God. Paul's point is simple, “Godliness is only possible in the gospel.” **No one can be righteous or godly apart from the gospel. Nothing we do can achieve it and nothing we do can maintain it. It is all sourced in the gospel.**

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

It shouldn't surprise us that such a departure from the gospel would arise from within the church. However, this subtle shift happens all too frequently when we fail to protect the gospel internally and promote it externally. At some point, the gospel ceases to be enough for us – and we default to a man-centered approach to manufacturing the fruit that can only be produced by the Spirit. *Friends, Jesus is not only necessary; He is enough.*

It appears both spiritual and wise to leverage the law to produce godliness, holiness, and the Christian character we long to see and feel – to measure, qualify, and mass produce. However, such pursuits will leave the individual and corporate fellowship disappointed, depressed, and disillusioned for it can never provide what it promises.

Only grace can train us to live out the gospel. Only the Spirit can produce such fruit. This is why Paul ends his charge to the Ephesian Elders on the beach of Miletus with this, *“Therefore, be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified”* (Acts 20:31-32).

1. We should reject the idea that rules and regulations can make us godly.
2. We should receive the shadow with gratitude and learn to enjoy the good things God has created.

It is hard for us to imagine how eating pie tonight, having a father/son breakfast and football game or enjoying a thanksgiving dinner with family is an expression of the gospel, but it is. By receiving all of this with thanksgiving Paul says the gospel is proclaimed and godliness is exhibited. We need to see the shadow for what it is. Shadow is God's means of His people tasting and seeing that He is good (Ps. 34:8). So may we in all of our thanksgiving taste and see that He is good and may such expressions enable us to know and experience His joy within Himself and for us.