

1 TIMOTHY 1:12-20

We've seen that there are problems in the local church in Ephesus.

False teaching has infiltrated the church distracting the church from its mission of preaching the gospel and making disciples.

Paul writes to Timothy and the big message is... "Sort out the church for the sake of the gospel!"

The first way he is to do this is by silencing the false teachers and by speaking the gospel.

The focus of the passage is why the gospel is worth fighting for and how we are to fight.

A. The gospel is worth fighting for

"I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost." (v12-15)

1. The gospel is worth fighting for because it saves sinners.

Verse 15 is a verse worth memorising.

This is a trustworthy saying – it is true, it is reliable.

This is a saying deserving of full acceptance – it should be embraced by everyone.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – He goes to where people are in danger and at great cost to Himself rescues them from God's wrath.

Paul is an example of a sinner who has been saved by God's grace – the unlikeliest of candidates to be saved.

The man who called himself the least of the apostles also called himself the chief of sinners.

"But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen." (v16-17)

2. The gospel is worth fighting for because if it can save Paul it can save anyone.

God chose him not because he is talented and God saw him as a great player to have on His team.

Paul says he received mercy to be an example.

To show that God can have mercy on anyone, if He can have mercy on Paul.

The church is to display what Christ can do to a world that needs Him to save them.

And so Paul overflows with praise to Jesus.

3. Applications

Do you see how important the gospel is? – if we don't, we won't keep it central, and we won't fight for it.

Are you amazed that God would show you grace?

Do you have a heart that overflows with praise to Jesus for what He has done for you?

B. Therefore... "Fight!"

"This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme." (v18-20)

1. The fight starts in you.

An urgent command.

The only way Timothy will be able to do this ministry he has been chosen for, of silencing the false teachers and speaking the gospel is if he is actively following Christ.

He needs to be holding faith – sticking with the trustworthy message that deserves full acceptance.

He needs to be holding a good conscience – that is a conscience that says to us turn around when we are going the wrong path.

2. Failure to fight results in shipwreck.

Bad doctrine usually starts with bad conduct.

Two men failed to listen to their conscience and showed up in the way they lived.

This in turn led to them to be false teachers, and church discipline for their own good.

3. Applications

Watch our life: Are we rejecting our good consciences? Are we developing a good conscience by digging into God's Word?

Church discipline is vital for the good of those who have shipwrecked their faith – they need to know that what they are doing is not okay!