



Today's Sermons
 Morning: Things Precious
 Evening: A Day In The Life of Jesus

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FOR THE RECORD

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Offering	\$1543



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Times of Services:
Sunday
 Bible Study:... 10:00am
 AM Worship:...11:00am
 PM Worship:...6:00pm

Wednesday
 Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
 Sunday:.....7:30am
 "Back to the Bible"
 AM 580 WSKS
 93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm &
 Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

The Aim of it All
 Leon Barnes

I admit it is something of a challenge to remember what it was like to be a young preacher trying to figure out who I was and what I was supposed to do in God's service. I do remember how frustrating it was to always be referred to as one of the young preachers in the area. Now, it would be nice to have someone refer to me in that way. But I want you to imagine with me what it must have been like when Timothy was left by Paul in Ephesus to carry on the work and deal with the problems they were having after Paul left. I can easily imagine him thinking, "I've got to get out of here. Why in the world did I ever agree with Paul that I would stay here? I have no clue how to deal with all the problems they are having in the church here." You get the sense that Paul knew he was wanting to get out of the place when he writes to Timothy, "As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus, so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (I Timothy 1:3-5)

Continued Inside

A Sound Church

A sound church is not merely a church that sounds good, but rather one that is firmly anchored in truth!

"That they may be sound"

Titus 1:13

Sound in DOCTRINE	• Titus 2:1
Sound in FAITH	• Titus 1:13
Sound in UNITY	• John 17
Sound in ORGANIZATION	• Ephesians 4:11
Sound in WORK	• Titus 3:1
Sound in WORSHIP	• John 4:24
Sound in TEACHING	• 2 Timothy 4:14
Sound in GIVING	• 2 Corinthians 9:7-8
Sound in ZEAL	• 2 Corinthians 9:2
Sound in LEADERSHIP	• Acts 2:38

"But speak those things which become sound doctrine." Titus 2:1

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It is pretty obvious what some of the problems were they were facing. There were some people, probably people in leadership who were teaching things that didn't fit with what Paul had taught them as the gospel of Christ. It is important to remember that the word "Doctrine" didn't stand for some creed or code of what everyone was supposed to believe about everything. Doctrine just means teaching.

Anything that is taught as a part of what God wants from us as his disciples is doctrine. When Paul wrote Titus to make certain they stayed with sound or healthy doctrine he described it as having to do with how older men should instruct younger men and how older women were to teach younger women. It was about how they were to live and love their husband and children. It was about how slaves were to act as Christians in such a way as to adorn the doctrine or teaching of God.

Look closely at the first 8 verses of Titus chapter two to see all the ways he described the sound teaching or doctrine. Since Paul had warned the elders from Ephesus that from among their own selves men would arise teaching perverse things to draw away disciples after them in Acts 20:28-32 it is obvious that was going on now. If these teachers trying to lead people away from the gospel were indeed among the elders of the church in Ephesus it becomes even more obvious how difficult that would be for a young man like Timothy. He was probably thinking, "Why didn't Paul handle this while he was here? He is older, wiser and more respected. Why would they listen to me?"

Notice how Paul defines the problem and offers the solution for him to teach and uphold. The problem was they were devoted to myths and endless genealogies that promoted speculations rather than the job of shepherding and administering to the flock that God had given them. It is terribly easy to fall into the myths that are all around. Many times they relate to things we have heard so often we decide they are in Scripture, when the Bible doesn't mention a them at all. You've heard some along the way I'm sure. "I heard Brother so and so say back over at some lectureship." "The leadership here has always followed this plan and if you get off this you won't still be the church of the Bible." I'm sure the endless genealogies referred to people tracing their background back to the Jews, the chosen ones of God during the Old Testament era. "You do realize my granddad was one of the original members of the church here don't you." "My grandpa started this church." "If you had just have known those people or their background what a difference it would've made in your life and how you see things. You just don't have the right to change things that were always part of our heritage." That is about endless genealogies that led people astray. God had given Timothy and others a stewardship to carry out, a mission to follow and it didn't have anything to do with their heritage

Anytime we are struggling with things that people are saying or teaching that has the potential of leading them away from God it is vital to come back to check

your aim. What are we trying to do here? Most likely between the different false teachers there were very different aims. One's aim was to have control of the congregation while another's was to get honor for their family. Another may simply have had a different view or be attempting to justify some action that was going on in the group.

Paul tells him the aim of it all should be love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. I wonder if you took a poll of the different aims people had in church what they might be. Often our aim centers around numbers.

How many new people did we have in our gathering this year? How much did our contribution grow? How many baptisms did we have? But none of those get close to the aim the Holy Spirit led Paul to lay out for the church. Our aim should be love from a pure heart. How can you identify love from a pure heart? Likely the best way would be to go back to I Corinthians 13:4-8 and simply compare the different ways of showing love with what we see in our own actions. Love is patient and kind. It doesn't envy or boast and isn't arrogant or rude. It doesn't demand its own way all the time. It isn't irritable or resentful. It doesn't rejoice in wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. Love never ends.

Take no excuses as to why we didn't act with patience or kindness or out of a good conscience. God's aim for the church is for us to be a people of love from a pure heart. His aim is for us to have a good conscience and a genuine or sincere, real faith. I'm here to tell you, you can't measure those things by any numbers you keep.

I'm not at all certain we can measure them in anyone other than ourselves and often it is extremely difficult to do with ourselves because we tend to want to make ourselves look good rather than just be honest about it.

As churches, as preachers and teachers in the church, let me plead with us all, we need to get our aim on the right things. If we are aiming for things that don't fit those standards of love, faith, a good conscience and pure heart we are absolutely certain to miss the target. So start with putting up the right target and then take a long aim at it every day. Then, just maybe we will hit it some of the time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mar 1st – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class.
- Mar 8th – Preach & Eat & 1:30 Song Service & Worship @ Eula's @ 3:00 pm.
- A Volunteer is Needed to Take Over Doing the Bulletin – See Tim Canup.
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell