

# 1 Timothy 4:1-8

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[0:00] pick up where we left off and that will be into the fourth chapter. So we'll be in 1 Timothy chapter 4. Our text this morning will be verses 1 through 8. So 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 1 through 8.

So I know that a lot of time has passed and we want to get ourselves kind of caught back up as to where we were at. We will do that very quickly before we get into our text this morning. If you remember, Paul is writing this letter to his son in the faith of Timothy, which is really not worth repeating because it is there in the title.

But you may know that he left Timothy behind at Ephesus when he went on into Macedonia. So you can go read the correlating accounts there found in the book of Acts. And you can see that Timothy was left behind at the church of Ephesus to kind of set things in order because Paul had to leave in Haiti because there was an uproar in the city and it was time for Paul to leave.

And we understand that Paul had spent a number of months, even a year and a half there at the city of Ephesus, but he did not think the church was really on firm foundation. Though by the time he left, there were a multitude of elders that were already present.

There was some leadership that was established. And he left Timothy behind to continue to instruct these men. So what we have found is in the first chapter, first, second, and third chapter, we kind of have the groundwork for that.

[1:20] So as is the case in most of Paul's writing, he introduces doctrine and theology first, and then he goes right into application. Not every book of Paul's is easily divisible that way, but most of them are, and that the first half is doctrine, theology, and the latter half is the application.

Because as we always say, and it bears repeating every time we gather together, and it will bear repeating in light of the message this morning, that doctrine or theology without application is just useless information, right?

We want to apply that which we learn. So Paul is always really good at helping us to apply the realities. So part of the doctrine and theology he's already introduced for us up to this point is that he has given us the qualification of elders.

He's given us the qualification of deacons. He has shown us how these are to be the servant leaders, the elders, the servant leaders of the church, and the leading servants, deacons of the church.

So there ought to be those who are leading through the word and those who are serving through the word. And it is a practice that was established. And these are individuals that have qualifications attached to them because the church has a high calling.

[2:34] We see the church's high calling, and really the theme of the entire book there found in the third chapter, verses 14 and 15. And he says in chapter 3, verse 14 and 15, I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long.

But in case I am delayed, I'll write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

So here you have it. The theme of the book of 1 Timothy is how one ought to conduct himself in the church. Now, that doesn't mean, as we have said, the building. But as we are gathered together, the household of the living God.

And then he gives us what is the church. It is the pillar and the support of the truth. I need you to hold on to that because it bears directly on what we will see in our text this morning.

So understanding this book is written so that we will know how we ought to be the church. How we ought to look as the church. And it also is written so that we will know what we are as the church.

[ 3 : 37 ] We are the pillar and the support of the truth. Not a truth, but the truth. It is the church which holds up the truth in the world in which it is planted.

So it is the truth's pedestal. That is, the church has the position of proclaiming and uplifting the truth for all the world to see.

Now, we know that that truth is found in the person of Jesus Christ. For he says, For I am the way and the truth and the life. Right? I am the way, the light, and the truth.

So we understand that we are holding up Jesus Christ. Now, the pillar and the support is something that is not quite often paid much attention to, but it is absolutely essential.

We give the illustration that we anticipate by coming into this building. There are a number of people who have taken pictures on the exterior of this building. There are a number of people who will stop and ask if they can take pictures of the exterior of this building because it is a beautifully preserved building of brick that were made in the town of Wartrace in the 1800s.

[ 4 : 46 ] A lot of people like to take pictures of the exterior of this building. I have not met a single individual who has asked me if they can take pictures of our foundation. But they anticipate that the foundation is going to uphold that which they want to look at and they ought to look at.

And so the foundation is of utmost importance. And here we are. The church is the pillar and the support of the truth. So that has brought us up to date, if you will, of where we are this morning. So if you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God from 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 1 through 8.

The Word of God says,

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day.

[ 6 : 41 ] We praise you that you've given us an opportunity of gathering together as the church. We pray now that as we have read your Word, we have seen your Word, and we have heard your Word. That it would be the Word of God which speaks to the heart and minds of men and women and boys and girls.

We pray that through the Word of God we would draw closer to you. That we would become more and more conformed to your image for your glory and yours alone. And we ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen. You may be seated. Here we see the reality of the church. And in this reality we see from our text this morning the danger it faces.

That is the danger the church faces. Now we need to pay attention to this because the danger is directly connected to the purpose.

Unless we understand what the purpose of the church is, we will be confused on what the dangers that confront the churches are. We need to understand here from our text the danger that the church faces.

[ 7 : 46 ] We see a number of things here, but we see the pervading danger, the greatest danger. We will see the danger. We will see the place or the resource of the danger, how the danger comes into place.

And then we will see two things. So yes, I have four points this morning. We will see two things which help us to defend against that danger. So number one, we see the greatest danger is the devaluing or a devaluing of the faith.

It is the devaluation of the faith. It tells us here, but the Spirit explicitly says. But the Spirit explicitly says.

Now when we notice the text at first reading, we notice that there are two spirits that are speaking. There are the deceitful demonic spirits, and then there is the Holy Spirit.

It is the understanding when we read the text that Paul is making a declaration to us of something which the Holy Spirit has said a multitude of times. Jesus says in John chapter 16 that it is to your advantage that I go away.

[ 8 : 50 ] For if I go away, then I will send a paraclete. That's the word there in the original language. It is translated in your scripture helper. Or I will send the paracletos, which is like we would have in the court of law.

We need a paracletos, one to come beside us. A helper to kind of stand beside us and to give us a defense. Or one to stand in our place. He says, I will send the helper so that you will understand.

And he says, and when the Spirit comes, he will disclose to you the things that he hears from me.

And he will reveal these things to you because he says, you're not ready to understand everything

quite yet.

Pentecost had to come. We had an understanding of the falling of the Holy Spirit so that minds could be enlightened. We read this when we read the Gospels where it says that in latter times they understood what he was doing.

That they did not know what he was doing. But later on they remembered. They did not know what he was doing when he was overturning the tables. But later on they recalled that the word of God says that he would have a zeal for the house of the Lord.

[ 9 : 48 ] So there are these things which the Spirit testifies to. Now, this is a good place to stop. The Holy Spirit will never disclose or testify to something that is in contradiction with the rest of Scripture.

That is a good way of saying it. You're not looking for a new revelation that is not contained from Genesis to the book of Revelation. The only thing that the Holy Spirit will ever testify to is that which has already been declared.

Now, we say that. You say, well, no, Pastor, there are things that all of a sudden I had never seen this before. Well, he had been there all along. That's why we have eyes but do not see and ears but do not hear at times.

When we read the Word of God, my son asked me just the other day, he said, Dad, have you read the Bible through? I said, son, I've read it through a multitude of times. Your mother and I both have read it through a multitude of times.

But every time I read it through, you know what? The Spirit testifies again and again and again to me. He tells me something I didn't know before. Now, is that a new revelation? No. It is an opening up of an existing revelation.

[ 10 : 51 ] It is disclosing to me things that I was not prepared to hear before. I remember when I became pastor, I thought it would be my ambition to preach to the book of Revelations.

Some of you are shaking your head saying, why would you think that? After a few years of being pastor, I said, well, I'm going to preach to the book of Revelations. For about five years, I wanted to preach to the book of Revelations.

And God says, no, not yet. For about five years, I said, oh, but I want to. It's a good book. He said, no, not yet. And I kept pressing and I kept pressing and I kept pressing. I was over 10 years in the ministry before God says, now you can preach to the book of Revelations.

Why? Because I didn't understand it at first. Right? I needed to grow up a little bit. The Spirit needed to speak to my heart and disclose to me. Here, Paul says that after Christ ascended, the Spirit came and testified.

And he says, the Spirit explicitly says, explicitly says that in latter times, we find this refrain repeated throughout all scripture. But notice what the Spirit continues to say clearly.

[ 11 : 56 ] That in latter times, some will fall away from the faith. Some will fall away from the faith. Now, Paul is speaking to Timothy.

Timothy is where? At Ephesus. And if you were to go to the book of Acts, you would open up the book of Acts and you would turn to the 20th chapter of the book of Acts.

And you would turn to about the 28th, 29th verse of the 20th chapter of the book of Acts. And you will find that Paul is on his way to Jerusalem. And as he is on his way to Jerusalem, he stops over in Miletus.

And in Miletus, he calls to him the elders, plural, from the city of Ephesus. And when he calls the Ephesian elders to him, he says that I know that in latter times, wolves will come up, ravenous wolves will come up, and they will lead many away from the faith.

So it is the same warning given there as we have here. What is it? The Spirit says that some will fall away from the faith. Friend, listen to me.

[ 12 : 57 ] The greatest danger of the church is not an external enemy. As a matter of fact, wherever the church has been persecuted, the church has thrived.

The persecution has only strengthened the body of believers. Rulers and dictators and superpowers all over the world have tried to squash the church.

They have tried to rid the world of scripture. They have tried to get rid of all things of faith. Yet in every one of those instances, the church has grown stronger. The word of God has endured.

It goes into places like no other. It goes in ways like no other. One of the greatest testimonies you can ever read is a little book called God Smuggler where the gentleman talks about just bringing in

Bibles behind the iron curtain, openly in the back of his car, just driving through the borders, and how God just sovereignly protected him.

And he is just handing out Bibles everywhere. The world where he says there can be no faith, there can be no Bible, yet they're going and the church is thriving and the church is growing. And he was overwhelmed with the existence of the church.

[14:00] Friend, listen to me. The danger that faces the church is not the government. It's not the rulers. It's not the powers. It's the apostatizing of the church.

It's the falling away from within. The places where the church is the weakest, pay attention to it, is quite often when the church is the freest.

That is, when little is required to be a part of it, there is little that holds it together. Paul says that the Spirit says that there will be some who will fall away from the faith.

Now, we need to look at this because to fall away is where we get our English word apostatize or apostasy. And all of a sudden, if you are a student of Scripture, and I hope that you are, and this will be a good place for me to tell you that the Bible reading plans for the coming year are in the back on the table between the restrooms.

There are a number of plans back there. If you don't have one, every year at the end of the year, I encourage you to begin one. If you've done one, you've finished one, then, my friend, do another one or start it all over again. But there are copies back there on the table for you.

[15:13] As we make our way through the message, you will understand why. Listen, it says that some will fall away from the faith. So if we're paying attention to this, we need to say, well, if they fell away from the faith, that means they lost their salvation.

And that is a contradiction of a multitude of other passages of Scripture.

One reality that we must come to the conclusion to is that Scripture will never contradict itself.

Those who fall away, or those who to fall away implies that one was near something because the wording in the original language, it means to move away from a prior position.

So it implies being around or near something and then going in the opposite direction. But the rest of Scripture testifies to the reality that those who are given to Christ, he loses not one.

I believe in the eternal life of the saints. That is, once saved, always saved. But pay attention to this. I believe in the eternal security of the saints.

[16:29] What we find in the falling away are the false professions, or the half-hearted devotees, or those who are near the faith but not of the faith.

It should not surprise you because our Lord and Savior himself said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven. He says, many on that day will say, Lord, Lord, did we not cast out demons in your name?

Lord, Lord, did we not perform many miracles in your name? Lord, Lord, did we not do all these things in your name? And he will say, depart from me for I never knew you. Friend, listen to me. It's not a matter of what one says.

It's not even a matter of what one does. It's a matter of who one is in Christ. And when we see people fall away, then it is a testimony to the reality that they were never genuinely saved.

Now, some of you have a hard time with that and say, well, that just strikes against what I feel. Well, it strikes against what I feel as well. But a long time ago, I had to say that my feelings are subjective to my circumstances and the word of God is true all the time.

[17:44] So I try to bring my feelings in line with the truth of scripture. And it testifies to the reality. Now, that doesn't mean that every backsliding individual will not come back to the faith.

That does not imply that. I mean, those who walk away from it, deny it forever, forsake it, and die in that eternal position. This ought to be something that moves us and motivates us.

But it also ought to be something, as Paul would write elsewhere, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Because it causes us to say, as the psalmist cried out, search me, O Lord.

Help me to know my wicked thoughts and my desperate ways. Rather than wondering, well, was that person genuinely saved? Maybe it would be very becoming of us at moments to stop and say, Lord, am I genuinely saved?

Are you truly my redeemer? Do I know you as my savior? And once we settle that thing, and now, friend, listen, I don't think the word of God wants you to live in doubt.

[18:50] That's why we have the book of 1 John. 1 John is written that you may know, that you may know, that you may know. If you're struggling with the assurance of your salvation, then come

to me and I'll tell you to read the book of 1 John.

And you will read 1 John, that you may know, that you may know, that you may know. John puts all these litmus tests in there. And if you fail the test, guess what? Don't get discouraged. Just run to the savior. If you fail the test and go meet the savior, then come back and say, where am I at now, O Lord?

But the reality is, the greatest danger is that the church would be filled with those who make a profession, but are not making a devotion.

It is the falling away of the faith. Number two. So how does the devaluing of the faith happen? Number two, we see the deception of demonic influence.

The deception of demonic influence. How do they do it? It says that in latter times, some will fall away from the faith. How? Paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

[19:57] Now, stay with me. Because it matters what you pay attention to. Parents, listen to me. Grandparents, listen to me.

It matters what our children pay attention to. It matters. It matters. You say, oh, well, that has no influence or impact upon them. Well, it does. Paying attention, it says.

Paying attention is how they fall away. They pay attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. You say, well, I would never look at anything that was demonic.

I would never look at anything that was of an evil spirit. I would dare never let my children do it.

Well, do you know how the book of James describes these same things? Oh, pay attention to it.

Because in James chapter 3, James, the brother of the Lord, says this.

That the deceitful spirits are natural and worldly. That is, he who rules the world, who is not Jesus Christ yet, but he who rules the world determines that which is natural in the world.

[21:06] And friend, listen to me. That which is natural and worldly too often is deceptive to godliness. Now, I'm not here saying we need to throw the world away in a handbasket.

I'm just saying you better pay attention to what you're paying attention to. Because what is acceptable in the world is not always acceptable in the kingdom.

And if we conform ourselves more to the natural thought of man, naturally, I am a sinner. Naturally, I am a rebel.

Naturally, I am desperately wicked to the very core of my being. And I've got news for you, so too are you. Naturally. But in Christ, we are supernatural beings.

In Christ, we are different. You say, oh, well, they just want to do what is natural. Don't let them do what is natural. That doesn't lead to godliness. Call them to something different.

[22:10] Pay any attention to, he says, of deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. Look at this. By means of hypocrisy, of liars seared in their own conscience, as with a branding iron.

Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. Here is how it happens. Not only is it the paying attention to the wrong things, it is being led by others in the wrong direction.

It is being led by men, it says, whose conscience has been seared. Elsewhere in Scripture, it tells us. Actually, I believe it's in the book of Ephesians where it declares this too.

In this book of Ephesians, Paul writing to the same church, he's writing of men who have given themselves over to a depraved mind, whose souls succumb to sin that they don't even think about sin anymore.

These are men who are carried away by their own lusts and their desires. They're not walking according to the Spirit, they're walking according to the flesh. And these are men whose consciences are seared. Be careful if sin becomes acceptable.

[23:18] And be careful if you're following those for whom sin is acceptable. It tells us that these are people who are leading others.

The great danger of the church is to be deceived by leaders who want to call them away. Call them away into a different path.

Men whose consciences have been seared. Men whose minds have been cast off. Men who have accepted the lie and believed the lie, but they use a little bit of half-truth. It says that they proclaim, you don't have to get married, you don't have to, you need to stop eating all this food.

Paul elsewhere says to be single is a good thing. He also says to fast is a good thing. Our Savior says to fast is a good thing. But yet it does not mean it is a dogmatic thing.

What these people are doing, or they're taking some truths and distorting them. These are men who are leading others astray. We live in a day and time, and I say this not to offend anyone, that we must be careful how much extra-biblical matter we connect to our scripture.

[ 24 : 33 ] Because again, be careful what you pay attention to. We want to so humanize our Savior that we diminish His godliness.

We want to make Him accessible to everyone. We want to make Him understandable. But yet He is the most incomprehensible one who could ever be.

Many of you know that one of my all-time favorite movies is Ben-Hur. I know I've alluded to that time and time again. One of the reasons why I like that movie is it never shows the face of Christ.

Never. You see His feet, but you don't see His face. Why? Because there was a day and time in which it was so irreverent to try to convey what He might have looked like that He was kept off of the movie screens.

And it was left to the reality that He is the uncreated one. He is the one that was only begotten, but we have no really idea because He is so magnificent, He is so glorious, that we dare not present Him in a way that is belittling of Him.

[ 25 : 42 ] But not so in our day and time, and I don't mean this to be discouraging, but we want to make Him so accessible that He's available to everyone. But friend, He says, unless you be drawn by the Spirit, you will not come.

We've lost the holiness of God by making Him accessible on our level. I've told you before, my favorite hymn of all times is Holy, Holy, Holy.

Because if there's one thing that I think that our churches, and our churches, I think we are doing a pretty good job of it, but our churches need to grasp more of, is the holiness of God.

A God that we stand in awe of. A God who took on flesh and dwelt among us, sure. And we call Him Emmanuel. But we don't want to bring Him down to our level.

Rather, we cry out to Him to draw us up to His level. It is the deception of demonic influence. So then, what do we do? Number three, the defense of sound doctrine.

[ 26 : 54 ] The defense of sound doctrine. Paul makes a transition. These people are telling you to abstain from food, to not be given in marriage. But he says in verse four, for everything created by God is good.

Everything created by God is good. You know, how do you know that? When you go back to the book of Genesis, God created, and He said, what? It is good. And if God says it's good, then it's good. Right?

It is good. It is good. It is good. It is the sinfulness of man that made it not good. But over and over, we find the creation of God is good. And nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude.

For it is sanctified by the means of the word of God and prayer. That is, God testified to it. And we cry out in prayer to our Father. And He sanctifies it.

He sets it apart for holy service. This morning, I did something that a practicing Jewish individual would never do. I asked the Lord to sanctify both sausage and bacon.

[ 27 : 52 ] And I ate it in my breakfast for holy service, for the nourishment of my body. And I got something. It was good. Right? I ate it. And it was good. And it was used for His glory, Lord.

Use it for your sake by the word of God and by prayer. But what Paul is declaring here is you need to know what the word of God says. You need to understand it.

And then he gives this admonition to Timothy in pointing out these things to the brethren. By the way, this is one of the requirements of the pastors slash elders in pointing out these things to the brethren.

It is to bring them to light, to heed the warning, to give the call. He says, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and the sound doctrine which you have been following.

Friend, listen to me. Doctrine matters. Doctrine matters. This is why I encourage you to get in the word of God, to read the word of God, to study the word of God, to get with individuals and study the word of God, to take part in some of our Sunday school classes or to get together with others and read the word of God, to come.

[ 29 : 02 ] This is probably the most sanctified time in all of our church gathering together is this moment, not because I'm taking it, not because I'm up here before you, but because the word of God is open before us.

This is what sets the course because doctrine dictates behavior. It just does. And if our doctrine is not sound, our behavior will not be sure.

Doctrine dictates behavior. If it is the doctrine of demons, then we fall away. If it is the sound doctrine of the faith, then we grow stronger.

However, those who have it as their job to look at counterfeits do not spend time looking and dwelling upon all the varying counterfeits of different things.

Rather, they spend their time focusing on the true items, the original items, the authentic items. And when they know what the truth looks like, when something that is different from the truth shows up, they recognize it immediately.

[ 30 : 10 ] Unless you know the truth, you won't know the counterfeits. This is why the greatest thing you can ever do in your life is to get into the word of God. Know what the truth of scripture says.

And then all of a sudden, lights begin to ping. The spirit has a declaration in your life. Says, this doesn't look right. This doesn't seem right. Listen, if we have not implanted the word of God, young people, old people, all of us in between, if we have not the word of God implanted within us, then what does the spirit have to convict us of sin that is existing?

If the word of God is not consistently put inside of us, if sound doctrine is not laid upon our foundation, if we deviate from the sound doctrine and the teaching of the saints, then there no longer is an avenue for conviction.

Now, the only thing that is available is deception. Any individual comes to me and they want to come to me for no matter what counseling matter it is. It doesn't really matter what you come to me and you want to sit down and we need to have a counseling session.

I'll promise you that in one of the first sessions, one of the very first things I will ever ask you is how is your study of scripture? Because your study of scripture will always determine, it will always determine your behavior.

[ 31 : 29 ] Always. It is the defense of sound doctrine. You say, well, how can I ensure that I'm not one of those who fall away? Get in the word. How can I ensure that I will, as it says in the book of Revelation, for those who overcome, how can I be sure that I will overcome?

Get in the word. How can I defend myself against the deception of demons? Know the truth of the sound doctrine. And then fourth and finally, here is a discipline that is beneficial.

It is a discipline that is beneficial. It says, but have nothing to do with worldly fables fit for old women. It's not picking on you.

That was just a saying in their day. Have nothing to do with old fables. That is, don't be carried away by what everybody's saying. Don't be carried away by the latest fad.

Don't be carried away by those things. He says, on the other hand, discipline yourself. Now, he's telling Timothy this, but the application applies to all.

[ 32 : 38 ] But discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. Now, the word discipline implies an intentional, noted behavior to discipline oneself.

It is intentionality. It implies effort. At times, it implies rigor and strain. But it says, to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness, for bodily discipline is of only little profit.

I used to use that to say, see, honey, I don't need to exercise. But then the Lord convicted me that it does say it's of little profit. So I have to do a little profit, right? It is of little profit.

I used to say, see, I don't need to do anything. I need whatever I want to. It says bodily discipline is only of little profit. But it does say it's of some profit. So I have to do a little bit of that, too. It says, but bodily discipline is of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all.

Oh, how much effort is put into bodily discipline in this age and time in which we live. Charles Spurgeon said that there are a multitude and multitudes of individuals who would give everything to ensure that they could live on perpetually.

[ 33 : 54 ] They would strive and move and discipline their bodies. And if they thought they could avoid death, they would do it at any cost. They would do whatever they could just to remain on living. But the sad reality is, he said, those same people care little about eternity.

They want nothing to do with godliness, not realizing that they're casting aside that which is of unestimable worth for that which is of lowly value. Friend, you can live and you can behave and you can discipline yourself in this age and you can extend your life all you want to.

But the wages of sin is that the guarantee that you will have is that some will die. And no matter how much effort you put into it, it was only for a season.

But godliness, it says, is profitable for all things. Godliness makes you a better individual today. Godliness ensures that you will live eternity with him in that day.

It is the realization that when death comes, it is just the doorway of entering into the eternal presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But it's a discipline. It is a discipline.

[ 35 : 04 ] There will be times when you will fail. There will be times where you do good at it. But it is an ongoing matter of concern to discipline yourselves for the purpose of godliness.

I'm not asking, do you have it all figured out? I'm just asking, are you willing to be disciplined in that manner? Will you press on?

Because see, the great danger we face is ungodliness in each one of our lives and in the life of the church. Let's pray.

O Holy Father, we thank you so much for this day. But for the blood of Christ, none of us are deserving or worthy of being in your presence.

But through that gracious blood, we come boldly before the throne of glory and we cry out, Abba, Father. Lord Jesus, we pray that you would help us realize where we stand before you today.

[ 36 : 08 ] Give us an assurance of faith or give us a holy desire for that assurance. Help us to guard our ways and to guard our steps for your glory and honor.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 39 : 38 ] Thank you.