

SOUND WORDS IN THE CHURCH

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Know the critical importance of having teachers speak sound doctrine in the church.

Suggestion: This lesson will call attention to important truths in this week's lesson. After the lesson, give your class next week's Student Lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: Paul wrote this letter from Macedonia to Timothy in Ephesus. He asked Timothy to stay in Ephesus to correct some serious problems in the church. The first problem that Paul mentioned in this letter was a false doctrine being taught that a person becomes righteous by keeping the Mosaic Law. This was contrary to the doctrine of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ. These teachers had to be stopped. "We know that the law is good, if a man uses it lawfully." (1 Timothy 1:8)

What did Paul charge Timothy to do in the Ephesian church? 1:3, 18

Timothy was charged to stop some teachers from teaching false doctrine (1:3). This would probably cause a battle, so Paul charged Timothy to be ready to fight a good fight. What is a good fight? A good fight is one that is fought against God's truth and won for His glory. In this case it appears it may have been against believers that were teaching false doctrine. The next question will tell what the end result should be when the battle is fought properly.

How does the commandment relate to the charge in verses 3 and 18? 1:5

The commandment does not refer to the Ten Commandments or to any one of 614 commandments in the Mosaic Law or the command to love God or to love one's neighbor. The word for "commandment" is the same Greek word for "charge" that Paul gave to Timothy (1:3, 18). Now the end result of Paul's charge or commandment to Timothy was to fight the battle with love out of a pure heart, with a good conscience (that did not offend the Spirit or his conscience) and with sincere (genuine) faith.

How is the law to be used in a lawful manner? 1:8

The purpose of the law is not to show people how to be saved or how to live a godly life. The purpose of the law is to show people that they are sinners (Rom 3:19-20). If unsaved people know they are lost sinners, deserving the judgment of God, they will be prepared to receive Jesus as their Savior. If saved people try to live a godly life by keeping the law, they will have the same bad experience as Paul (Rom 7:7-23). The law is not for righteous people to become more holy; it is for sinners. The law has no power in itself to change a person. The power comes from God and is given to those that humble themselves and confess their sins, seeking the mercy and grace of God. Posting the Ten Commandments in schools and in public buildings may seem like a good thing to save people or to make people more like Christ, but that is expecting the law to do what it cannot do. The law can convict people of their sins, but the death of Jesus Christ is needed to pay the penalty of our sins and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave is needed to give us power over sins. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news that saves people. Preaching this gospel in churches in addition to the law, is needed to save lost people from their sins. Such preaching will also teach Christians how to witness to lost people that they meet outside of the churches.

How was Paul's conversion an example to sinners? 1:12-16

Paul said that he was a blasphemer and a persecutor and a person that injured and killed people, but God showed him mercy because he did it ignorantly. He thought he was serving God by destroying the Christians that were a threat to the Jewish religion, but he did it in unbelief. The Lord showed him an abundance of grace to save him. He discovered that Jesus Christ, whom he vehemently opposed, came into the world to save sinners (Lk 19:10), not to condemn them (Jn 3:17). Since he was the chief of sinners and the Lord saved him and even called him into the ministry, he is an example to all sinners that they too can be saved by the mercy (not giving them the punishment that they rightly deserve) and by the grace of the Lord (giving them the blessings of salvation that they do not deserve). His salvation gives hope to every sinner.