
Sermon Notes

July 18, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Handling Truth 1 Timothy 6:20-21

P. S.

- ❖ Following a “P. S.” to Timothy describing how God’s people are meant to handle treasure, Paul follows up with a “P. P. S.” telling them how they are to handle truth
 - safeguarding the truth has been an issue in the church from its beginning
 - new and unprecedented challenges are causing the church of our time to compromise the truth
- ❖ Paul’s final words to Timothy are of extreme importance for the 21st century church in the Western world

Guard the Deposit

- ❖ Q *Timothy*
 - intensely personal
 - emotional and heartfelt
- ❖ *Guard the deposit entrusted to you*
 - defend it, watch over it
 - the language of business
- ❖ What is the deposit?

- personal faith? pastoral role? something else?
- the whole body of Apostolic doctrine upon which the Christian faith is founded
 - a “Trustee of the gospel”
 - preserve it so it remains unharmed and unchanged
 - ♦ you are not free to make things up as you go along
 - ♦ a ministry of preservation rather than a ministry of innovation
- Philip Ryken: “Orthodox Christianity is not to be reinvented, re-envisioned, or reinterpreted; it is to be cherished, guarded, and defended.”
 - the facts of our faith come to us by a divine revelation that is committed to our care
 - we are to pass the gospel message on to others unimpaired and unencumbered by any of our own fancies and fantasies
- ❖ The danger of searching for “something new”
 - a “new” doctrine, a “new” experience or a “new” level of experience
 - the church’s mission is to offer the same message, “the same old gospel” (which is NOT boring!)
 - the church’s duty is to the truth
- ❖ Leo the Great (d. 401) “... the deposit is... a thing brought to thee, not brought forth from thee; wherein thou must not be an author, but a keeper; not a leader but a follower. Keep the deposit.”
- ❖ William Barclay: “...in our day the church is weakened and enfeebled by inattention to the deposit...”

An Unfinished Task

- ❖ Guarding the deposit remains every bit as urgent today as it was in Timothy's day
 - two-pronged command
 - something to GUARD and something to AVOID
- ❖ Avoid irreverent babble and what is falsely called "knowledge"
 - avoid false teachers who (knowingly or not) oppose the gospel and threaten to derail the church from the mission Christ has given her
 - avoid those who contradict Biblical truth and cause you to live far below the high calling you have received in Jesus Christ
 - avoid those who sprinkle Bible verses over their talks
 - avoid those who promise you things in the name of Jesus that Jesus Himself never promises
 - Jesus promises you that in the world you will have tribulation and that those who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted
 - Jesus knows nothing of a message that claims God wants you to be wealthy, healthy and happy
- ❖ Do not wander, do not drift, do not follow or listen to those who *have swerved from the faith*

A True Measurement

- ❖ The most important measure of any church is how it handles the Word of God
 - the church's responsibility before God is to guard and proclaim the truths of Scripture
 - treasure God's Word and guard the gospel
- ❖ Accept the Word of God for what it is (1 Thess 2:13)
 - honor the Word (Job 23:12)
 - love the Word (Psalm 119:97)
 - obey the Word (John 8:31)
 - proclaim the Word (2 Timothy 4:2)
 - defend the Word (Jude 1:3)
 - study the Word (2 Timothy 2:15)

Personal Application

1. What specific opportunities and responsibilities has God given you to guard and proclaim the truths of Scripture?
2. In what ways might you be tempted to "help the gospel out" by reshaping or retooling its message so that it is more palatable or more acceptable to those with whom you share it? What does the teaching of these few verses say about all such efforts?
3. Are there any places where you may be exposing yourself to the teaching of some who have swerved from the faith? How can you tell whether or not this is the case? What will you do about this?