

# ***GUARD THE DOCTRINE***

1 Timothy 6:20-21

## **INTRODUCTION**

- The believer has been entrusted with a most precious inheritance.
- It is the faith once delivered to the saints; the gospel of the grace of God; the doctrine of Christ.
- God had committed the gospel to Paul's trust (1:11) and Paul committed it to Timothy.
- It was then Timothy's responsibility to keep what had been committed to him, and to pass it on to faithful men, who would in turn pass it on to others (2 Timothy 2:2)
- From one generation to the next, the faith has been passed down, in spite of persecution by the enemies of the cross, down to us today.
- The continuation of the gospel requires steadfast, faithful stewards who will guard and preserve the doctrines of the faith.
- Paul closes this letter to Timothy by emphatically reiterating two of the primary themes in the Pastoral Epistles: perseverance in the faith, and refuting of error (cf. 1:18; 4:1-16; 6:11-16).
- Unusually, Paul does not include in his conclusion any personal greetings.
- The final exhortation is both deeply earnest and personal: "O Timothy".

## **I. HOLD THE ENTRUSTED FAITH**

- A. The doctrine is from God
  - 1. This was not of Timothy's own devising
  - 2. We are not the authors of the doctrine, but the keepers
  - 3. The Greek word means a "deposit" (2 Timothy 1:13)
- B. There is to be no compromise in any area of Scriptural teaching
- C. We will protect what we value (2 Peter 1:1)

## **II. HALT FROM ERROR AND FALSEHOOD**

- A. It is the Christian's duty not only to proclaim the truth, but to expose error
  - 1. Many today only want a "positive message"
  - 2. Much of the New Testament is devoted to refuting error
- B. Avoid profane and vain babblings
- C. This is a description of every form of false teaching.
  - 1. "Profane" means common, unsanctified, impure.
  - 2. Profane babblings refers to any teaching that is derived from man's natural reasoning rather than God's Word.
  - 3. "Vain" means empty, without value.

4. Vain babblings is teaching that has no spiritual value (1:6; 4:7)
5. Such teaching produces ungodliness and strife (2 Timothy 2:16,23)
6. We should consider and evaluate what is the fruit and result of this or that teaching.

D. Avoid science falsely so called

1. For Timothy, this applied to Epicureanism, Stoicism and Gnosticism (Colossians 2:8)
2. It refers to anything that purports to be science but which is contrary to God's Word.
3. There are many examples of this pseudo-science in our day
  - a. Evolution
  - b. Theological modernism
  - c. Modern textual criticism
  - d. Psychology

### **III. HEED THE EXAMPLE OF THE FALLEN**

A. These people professed to be true Christians

1. These are apostates
2. Evidence of true conversion is perseverance in the faith (John 8:31; Hebrews 3:14; 1 John 2:19)

## B. They erred from the faith

1. The word for err means to “miss the mark”, to “deviate or swerve from the truth” (1 Timothy 1:6)
2. This shows the danger of false doctrine
3. Many professing Christians and entire denominations have descended into apostasy
4. The natural tendency of any church is towards apostasy (cf. Revelation 2:4)
5. Apostasy begins and progresses in small increments
6. Unless believers and churches are on constant guard against error, they will depart from the truth

## **CONCLUSION**

1. 1 Timothy is a letter to a pastor teaching the importance and the functions of a Baptist church (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15)
2. Sound doctrine and practice are the keys to the church functioning as it should.
3. We see the results of neglecting the principles of 1 Timothy in the widespread apostasy of our day.
4. It is only by the grace of God (v. 21) that we may hope to keep that which is committed to our trust.