

Draw lines and have courage! Have nothing to do with them

Online service sheet during the coronavirus.

Reading Psalm 62

Reading 2 Tim 3:1- 9 (page 1196)
See also Psalm 79 and
2 Thess 2:1-17 (page 1189)

Title: Draw lines and have courage!

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The audio file is [20_05_24.mp3](#) in the sermons directory

Reflective prayer what does this mean for me Lord.....

Close -----

Welcome

- Imagine you are on holiday – a pleasant thought in these times – You are in a holiday complex and in the next apartment is another family. They become very friendly and like to join up with you at the pool or in the restaurant or lounge. They strongly identify with you and are very friendly. But you find out they are all drinkers and swear a lot. So you sum up the courage not to continue to have anything to do with them.

- Or changing scenario it could be that you have a lodger who tries to join the family but he is a bad character. He becomes over friendly with your daughter, so you send a shot across the bow of this most unsuitable suitor.
- Or you're running a business. Some want to become partners in your company. They are well known and are very persuasive. But you can see they will, if allowed to proceed, cause great damage to the company and its reputation. So you stand firm and have nothing to do with them or their schemes.

All those scenarios require you to draw a line, take a stand, to have courage.

Timothy needed courage to deal with what God had for him. So you and I need courage to take a stand for Christ today as we follow Him.

So what's going on here? Timothy is leading the church in Ephesus and in verses 2:23-26 we hear of a group in the church who let their foolish notions run away with them and it produces stupid arguments. What is Timothy told to do with them? v25, **gently instruct** - always look for the imperatives!

Now we have another group described in 3:1-5 what is he to do with this group? **gently instruct**? NO. verse 5 "**have nothing to do with them**".

- Who is in which group? There is no division in the House where people politely file into the lobby through one of two doors!

✚ It needs wisdom to work it out - & courage to act on that decision! x2

Paul warns him **mark this, there will be terrible times in the last days.** – Timothy the barometer is rising there are storms ahead!

- At this point you might be asking when is this going to be now or later?
- And is this referring to people inside the church or those outside?

Well 1stly it's **in the last days**. Heb 1:2 and other places indicate this age we are in now from Christ 1st coming to his 2nd. Is known as '**the last days**'

So in case Timothy you are tempted to think "*these things are so far ahead that they won't affect me*" - think again. Don't copy Hezekiah who in hearing of the destruction of Jerusalem thought "phew at least it won't happen in my lifetime".

No Paul wouldn't waste ink warning him of things over the distant horizon. When he says **Have nothing to do with them**, that must mean now. When Paul says: **mark my words** he is saying listen "Storms are coming now" And so they will for you & I too. And we need the courage to stand firm in them.

2^{ndly} Is this happening out in the world - or here in the church?

Paul is hardly going to tell Timothy to have **have nothing to do with them** 'out there'. Timothy won't be expecting those 'out there' to be living the Christian life! No, they are those 'in here' claiming to be in the church. ...or claiming to be the church - in conflict with - and clambering over Christ's true church.

These people claim a personal godliness 'have a form of godliness.'

verse 13 throws more light on the this: "**while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.**" Imposters are gatecrashers, coming in to where they do not belong,.... they are tricksters and pretenders.

✚ So sorry Timothy terrible times are coming to you – your church - through terrible people.

Timothy is thinking "how can I see who is in this second group?" What's so different about them that they are to be treated differently from the first?

What do we know of them?

Note the first quality on the list is love. The mark of the Christian is love.

If you are not loving towards your brother and sister, then you are not a Christian. Do you realise that? Do I need to repeat that?

But these **People will be lovers of themselves**

Bound up within every man and woman, boy or girl as image bearers of God, is love. So too the giving of allegiance, So too a strongly moral nature. It's intrinsic to all of us, an imbedded legacy as image bearers of God.

✚ However, as you know since the fall it is now corrupted.

That means your, and my moral judgments are corrupted. My natural love is not directed towards God and others - but self, it's become a self-love.

And so my allegiance is now towards created things rather than the creator

A reborn man or woman is re-created. The new indwelling of God's Spirit instills a love directed towards God our maker and towards others. The Holy Spirit's presence desires acknowledgement and worship be given to Him to whom it rightfully belongs. And we have a reinvigorated conscience.

This new nature desires everything be brought into willing submission to Christ our new Lord. *We are wonderfully changed and we know it!*

The un-regenerated man or woman still has love - but it is still self-love. I think we can see that everything else in this list stems from that.

2a

All that follows springs from that font of an evil heart. One thing leads to another **People** who are **lovers of themselves**, become **lovers of money**, And **boastful**, And therefore **proud**, and **abusive**, And therefore **disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, etc. etc**

Ungrateful, The prevalence of ingratitude is a good indicator of a decline of Godliness. Godliness makes us grateful to God, and to man.

3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— I won't go through each one.

Here is one of a number of lists in the Bible Romans 1, Galatians 5, Jude, etc ... stalls laying out the evil fruit of an evil heart.

As Romans 1 says men make up new ways of doing evil. They are **Rash** i.e without sensitivity, prone to run headlong without a thought, carnal and *Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*

In their unrestraint they go from bad to worse.

Jude has much to say about them: "**certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a licence for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.**"

"**These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only the mselves. "These men are grumblers and fault-finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage." The Lord Jesus Christ foretold: "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.**" x2 4,12,16,17-19

Notice Paul, like Jude, doesn't talk about their profession of faith. A profession of faith without the back up of deeds is meaningless. Don't be influenced by it. **By their deeds you will know them.** And here by their deeds and actions they deny Jesus Christ as Lord. They infiltrate God's people, but have no right to do so, - they are antagonistic to all that is Godly.

So what is the difference between the two groups? Timothy and you and I should be able to spot the difference –

People in one group have the spirit, People in the other don't. One group you can expect change and seek the Lord for progress v25,26 - the other not.

One group are to be gently instructed - the other are to be turned away from.

2b

We persevere with love and kindness towards our B & S in Christ, praying and expecting growth, but we don't expect those without the spirit to 'grow'

You and I should be able to know how best to relate to both. A pastor, or anyone else who cannot tell a sheep from a goat is pretty useless.

To 'gently instruct' this group is to **"give dogs what is sacred; and throw pearls to pigs.** (Dogs wild and pigs unclean) **If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.** Mt 7:6 these will!

"Don't judge" you hear. You need to make a judgment to obey that Scripture! – and Jesus says we should make good judgments. Timothy has to pass judgment in shunning these people and we will need the courage to do so too.

This group are parading evil under a cloak of godliness. They **have a form of godliness.** That is, they profess to be Christian. But like the Trojan horse within the church they are not there to edify it - but to destroy it.

What Timothy faced, we still face today, we have another clue as to who to look for.

Jannes and Jambres

Look up these two name in the Bible and you won't find them anywhere. – but you will in Aramaic OT known of the Jewish Targum. (They are also mentioned by other Jewish writers and the early church fathers.) *Jannes and Jambres* are mentioned in a Targum on Ex. 7:11 as magicians who opposed Moses.

These two were the leading men who opposed Moses in Egypt, by attempting to work counter miracles. The *point* of their mention here is that they resisted Moses by attempting to *imitate* his miracles; thus *neutralizing* the evidence that he was sent from God. So those in this group oppose the progress of the gospel by setting up a similar claim to that of the apostles; by pretending to have as much authority as they had; and so in neutralizing the claims of the apostles lead the weak-minded from the truth.

Paul gives an example of this evil - **6 They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires,**

Weak-willed, living carnally and easily lead by their feelings. A foolish head over a filthy heart make these women easy prey to seducers.

These imposters use deceit and trickery; the AV says: **they creep into** i.e secretly entering women's homes, maybe with a view to sexual exploitation.

✚ While this is likely to be true - Paul may mean something else here...

They **creep in** like snakes and so by sly means gain influence in the church. That is, they gain support for their opinions and through these weak women influence men. As Eve was used of the devil to cause Adam to fall.

I think it's the latter because we then read the women are **7 always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.** They "learn," one commentator says, as people who are always curious, even restless, but despite this never seem to arrive at any certainty of the truth.

Every Pastor knows women who have question after question that absorb hours of your time. They love to discuss. The truth is in some cases it's just because they enjoy the attention. I can think of several, always have something new to ask, but never seem to learn.

We need discernment, we must make a right judgment

Both groups profess faith, but this second group are not the Lord's people. Behind a façade of conformity, they are the devil's instruments to neutralise - and then hijack - the church.

All Bible based cults do this. Most keep away from the church although some try to link up and integrate:

- The Roman Catholics are constantly making advances towards the protestant church. All the movement is one way they draw others in. How quick we are to forget that the RC have been the main persecutors of the church in Europe
- In Kings Norton I am encouraged to join ecumenical partnerships local leaders with those who do not believe the gospel.
- So to the Faith movement with its false gospel of health and prosperity, they target Christian especially church leaders
- Liberal Christians try to be seen as the true Christians, so to nominal Christians. The latest BMS mag. is entitled 'outsiders' with an article by a LGBTQ 'Christian' and others all "voices we need to listen to"

This in different forms will be coming to a church near you! So...draw lines!

✚ All these remove lines – we need to redraw them!

Draw any lines and you will immediately be told you are 'unloving'

Draw lines and you will be accused of being 'divisive' – yes you are, that's the point. As gospel people we draw lines. This is basic Christianity.

Those who do not have the Spirit remain under God's curse and wrath. Those who do have the Spirit receive the blessings of Christ. –The only way to move from one state to another is by the Cross of Christ. There's the line! That is one of the reasons we have church membership. Don't take this lightly, it is clearly a biblical principle.

So stand firm in your decisions. Draw lines. The world is always trying to blur, move or remove lines. Beware of those who, under the guise of 'unity' or 'equality' remove the distinction between believers and unbelievers.

And the church in its weakness can fall to always trying to be "something for everyone" constantly trying the new thing to be appealing.

The word for church in Greek is *Ekleksia* which means a 'called out' people Timothy is like the bouncer, he is charged with maintaining the distinction between those in and those out. He's the doorman, to turn away and **have nothing to do with** those who will end up ultimately harming the flock.

I'm reading a compilation of contemporary accounts of the early church. There was a guardedness of the gathering of God's people. Not just because of persecution. You will find it remarkable that in all the writings there is no mention of evangelism, or the great commission or missionary work and it's thrust. Why is that? Because they were already in it, living it, they knew they were deep into enemy territory, they had persecutions. And what did they do? They guarded the exclusiveness, the uniqueness, the holiness of the church. That was its great attraction. – and I quote...

"churches did not use their worship services to attract new people. In the aftermath of the persecution of Nero in AD 68, churches around the empire—at varying speeds in varying places—closed their doors to outsiders. By the end of the 2nd century, many had become private or secret. By the 3rd century, some churches assigned deacons to stand at the doors, monitoring the people as they arrived. They admitted catechumens to the opening part of worship, the service of the word with its readings and sermon, but not pagans; and to the service of the Eucharist that followed they admitted neither pagans nor catechumens—only the baptized members of the community and believers from other churches with letters of recommendation. It is not surprising that pagans responded to their exclusion from Christian worship by speculation and gossip. The baptized Christians, on the other hand, knew the Lord's worship services were to glorify God and edify the faithful, not to evangelize".

And yet, improbably, the movement was growing. In number, size, and geographical spread, churches were expanding without any of the probable prerequisites for church growth. The early Christians noted this with wonder and attributed it to the patient work of God. The widespread caring action of Christian meant the pagans said look! Christianity's truth is visible; it is embodied and enacted by its members."

There is the moral authority for the Christian

The next section is to do with Paul's holy life, the other bracket is Timothy living a holy life (we looked at a few weeks ago) by this Timothy has his moral authority to stand firm - So it is true of you and I

✚ *Your holy life is the place from which you can stand firm.*

Jesus was not a man pleaser; he had courage, he stood firm. He was driven by his desire to honour his father at all times "For **Zeal for your house consumes me**"!

Will you have the courage to stand by your decisions - home and church?

Timothy, though timid by nature, learned courage. So can you and I.

Draw some lines. Make a right decision and stand by it. Don't accept a profession of faith – or even baptize - without good evidence.

This passage tells you and I plainly "Don't welcome into fellowship those who don't have the spirit" - If they are not stirring up trouble let them come and observe.

As far as the true church goes they don't belong. Do not give in to whoever shouts the loudest, or when you are in a minority. There will be those who oppose you, those who don't understand and push for the opposite view.

Take long term decisions not short term, don't give in to fear and appease, that never works, don't seek the world's way of compromise, that is always to yield ground you have no right to do.

Have courage to stand against the pressure and please Christ not man.

✚ *As Timothy needed to draw lines and the courage to stand by them.*

✚ *So you and I also need to draw lines and the courage to stand by them.*

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