

Stand firm Preach the word II

Welcome and new coronavirus instructions.

Opening Scripture Ps 36:5-9

Hymn mp 478 My song is love unknown

Scripture Reading Ps 33

Prayer / testimony

Reading Jeremiah 23:16-32 2 Tim 4:1-5

Hymn mp 264 I believe in Jesus

Sermon **Stand fast on God's word**

Hymn mp 501 O Jesus I have promised

Closing prayer/Dox. Rom 15:5,6



Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.The audio file is [20_08_30.mp3](#)

Jer 23:29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a **hammer** that breaks a rock in pieces?"

Welcome, pray

- Imagine it was you who boarded the United Airlines Flight 93. It's the 8:42am flight from Newark, N.J., on the US East coast heading for San Francisco, California. It would be a short flight. In just over an hour you will be dead. How was that?... Hi-jackers had taken over control of the plane. The Boeing 757 loaded with more than 11,000 gallons of jet fuel was now heading in a different unknown direction. The passengers sensed something was wrong and attempted to storm the cockpit - but it was too late, the aircraft traveling at 580 miles per hour plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. (11th Sept 2001)

Everyone died. The hi-jackers brought disaster on themselves and everyone on the plane. They took control, changed direction and ended up crash landing the plane. That is a dramatic example I know. But something similar can happen in any walk of life.

- One man I was speaking to told me that when a different pastor came to the church he effectively drove the church off the edge of a cliff.

That is what we are looking at this morning, Timothy is leading the church, he has his hands on the wheel - others are trying to pull him off course.

- John MacArthur reminds us that truth is always under assault – and it is actually a sin not to fight when vital truths are under attack. ... so...

Paul shouts to Timothy “stand firm, don't let go, don't give in, preach God's word, make sure you do” keep your head, its going to be tough, don't give in to those trying to pull you off course. So we read in the passage earlier.

Two main sections:

The problem and the inevitable consequences: The solution > consequences.

So first the problem.

You are here in church this morning. Why have you come? What do you expect? And what do you expect from the sermon? Be honest? Something interesting to listen to? Something to help me with the problems I'm facing? Maybe nothing, maybe its not an important part of your reason to be here.

Preaching is important to God, i.e. Preaching truth, Preaching God's Word.

In the Church Timothy was in – there were those who did not like this.

Those who, we are told: **will not put up with sound doctrine.** Its not my way.

What's behind that statement? There's a hardness - Last week, if you remember when we heard about those hard hearted religious Pharisees who "saw what they want to see". Now today are people who "hear what they want to hear". **Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.**

There will always be those - a great number - who say just what you want to hear. If this church won't do this or that for me, christen my children or baptise me then there are plenty who will! People with this attitude are usually difficult to reason with. They are not interested in what God says, but only on having what they want. In effect they say: "I don't want to listen to the truth – my opinion is more important. In other words....

"I will not put up with sound doctrine." Instead they **gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.**

- Google is an excellent search engine, I can remember what there was before! Yes really Google is excellent and I am grateful to God that I can find what I need so quickly, it is a real asset.
- But you know how it works so well don't you? It's because it knows you very well, so it can find just what you want. Yes the results are just what you want to see, what you don't want to see is kept back. That would make you feel uncomfortable. So the results are 'confirmatory' it's information that confirms what you already believe to be true, endorphins are released and bursts of pleasure are triggered in your brains giving you a good feeling. The results you find become an echo chamber of your own views, and they are reinforced by like-minded people. Don't worry - your presuppositions won't be challenged!

It would be just right for these people who we are told **turn their ears away** close their ears to **the truth - and turn aside to myths.**

So what are those myths, what are those false teachings that the people so wanted to hear? We are not told, for they will vary with the age and place we find ourselves. However, there are three main prompts:

1. Those teachings that fall are in line with what I naturally want.
2. Those teachings that come in from the world around. And because the teachings of the world around are opposed to God, and because my heart is opposed to God – both end up being united in purpose.

3. Those teachings prompted by the Devil who loves to destroy all that is important to God. For example: God's Name is not honoured as it should be but used as a swear word like never before. Attacked is the person of Jesus Christ as truly God come in the flesh and the only way of salvation. So too the sanctity of life, sexual morality, the sanctity of marriage, the image bearing nature of a man and a woman. The respect for property, the respect for the person and respect for authority. Honesty and integrity are all under attack.

The easy way of him achieving this is to put 'you' at the centre not the One true Holy God. So all three, this unholy trinity, work together - against God.

So more and more preaching becomes a message of how to help me be me. Positive, upbeat, helping me with my problems. All about how I can have the victory over fears, debt, depression, anxiety, and a host of other psychological needs. Did you know many of the well-known Christians of the past had what we would identify as mental health illnesses? Yet they kept their eyes on the Lord, loved His word, were busy in His work and through the means of Grace honoured Him - and God honoured them.

Christ didn't call you to think about you - but to serve him - and in that enjoy Him. Remember the first catechism "*the chief end of man is to Glorify God and enjoy him forever.*" It is me that is the problem, I won't enjoy God or serve him if I am thinking of 'me' It is 'me' that is in the way.

The purpose of God calling you to himself is not to fix everything that is wrong in your life – that would take a long time! - but show his power and grace through it. His grace is sufficient. It is. Try him in this.

The bottom line is that God is the centre – not me, man hates God to be God

- Refer to BMS Catalyst magazine, "God is not sovereign", says Rev Marg minister, no Bible references given. Woman vicar contemporary mindset

✚ **No doctrine in the whole word of God has more excited the hatred of mankind than the truth of the Sovereignty of God. C.H. Spurgeon**

Timothy is faced with people who say "Tone it down! Timothy stop teaching about a life of sorrowfulness for sin, about forsaking all for Christ, about a life of service, about my duty to reach the lost with the gospel, about hell for the unrepentant, about Christ's return and the judgment to come.

No these people then go home and go online and listen to **teachers** who **say what their itching ears want to hear.** It's the contemporary, easy message. Rather than confront the world around with all its evil practices - the message follows the world with its lack of truth, its harmful ideologies of

toleration, of equality, of diversity, etc. etc. The result is the church doesn't think biblically so it becomes weak, soft and silent when it should be strong and vocal, proclaiming the truth, and standing for what is good and right.

The consequence - where that takes us

What does that mean for the Christian?

✚ To let false teaching prevail, is give over control and crash the plane,...

To follow error does me great harm and makes me miserable. I'll explain..

- Crusader children from poor backgrounds often come with clothes that don't fit. Sometimes young girls hobble in wearing mum's shoes.
- God made us – and made us for truth. God is the great tailor. To live by God's truth is to have clothes designed to fit, fit well, we all like that.

Otherwise it distorts or hurts. So in believing something which is untrue I will feel uncomfortable, even if I can't quite work out why.

Wearing clothes that are too tight eventually causes harm. So does living at odds with what God has said or being disobedient to it. I would say that this dissonance not only makes for the miserable state of many Christians but causes such a jarring that the person is likely to become mentally unhinged.

✚ So on a personal level, to believe something which is untrue 'doesn't fit' how God made us to be.

What does it mean for the church?

Short cuts are very attractive but they can end up sending you in the wrong direction – I know. "If I had looked at the map I would have been fine!"

The Bible is like a map and if we follow it carefully all is well.

Marcion was a second century heretic who caused great harm. What he did was to tear out large parts of the Bible, all the bits he didn't like. Imagine if we had his Bible, it would be like going on a long journey with a map so altered we would be bound to end up in the wrong place, and totally lost.

The society in which we live is determined not to live according to the Bible. The consequences are obvious. When we the church which has the Bible chooses to remove or changes the bits we don't like we end up lost to, just like the world.

✚ The church in the UK, soft and silent as it is - has become quite indistinct from the Society around and in which God has called us to live.

3a

■ Where's the public prophetic voice against all the evil happening around? It seems non-existent. In Nazi Germany the church continued to worship and sing songs, but were not willing to speak out about the evil that was increasingly obvious. Covid response > sing songs.

✚ If individual Christians are no longer Holy and separate and distinct from those around - then the Church in the nation loses its identity.

What does it mean for God's honour?

Above all God is dishonoured. God will protect his honour, and if I am in the way of that, like salt that loses its saltiness is thrown away, so I will be removed. So there were serious consequences in Jeremiah's day when he preached - and no one listened. God judged His people and removed them. Jeremiah preached a message that was the opposite of what people wanted to hear - and they chose what pleased them - rather than what God had said. They listened to the false teachers: **"The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The oracles they gave you were false and misleading."** La 2:14 SO Judgment came.

The solution – The solution is to stand firm!

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 2tim 2:1-2

That is the answer. I hope that you came this morning ready to hear the preaching of God's word.

Different types of preaching: I do mainly Expository preaching, i.e. expanding the passage, we have also had a series of Doctrinal preaching. All preaching should be Practical preaching as well, and Evangelistic preaching. Timothy who is no evangelist is told to **do the work of an evangelist**. There's a message for you if you say to yourself "not for me, it's not my calling". There is Topical preaching, Devotional and Apologetical preaching. What I should do more of is Polemical preaching. That is the refutation of false doctrine within the church, including deviant forms of Christianity.

Titus explains my responsibility as an Elder **"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, ... they must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach"** Tit 1:9-11

3b

- Compromised teaching silently causes confusion and damage, like the youths who turn the road signs round in the middle of the night.
- ✚ Please never understate the importance of faithful Biblical preaching in the Church

Jesus said: “**Blessed are those who hear the Word of God, and keep it.**” Lk 11:28

- I was encouraged with the words of one pastor: “I have no interest whatsoever in compromising the Word of God or dummying it down for an ignorant and disobedient generation that is offended at strong Biblical preaching”
- ✚ John Calvin said, “The preaching of the Gospel is all about Christ and His glory, and not ourselves. And so we aim to make disciples of Christ, and to form Christ in the hearts and lives of those who hear the Gospel.”

Preaching is to make Christians think biblically– and therefore act biblically

Timothy is like the prophet Jeremiah. Both are charged with an unpopular message. Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet for again and again he brought a message that people didn’t want to hear, he preached in the temple, he preached in the palace, he preached at the city gate, he even wore a yoke around his neck to make the point of the people’s slavery to sin.

What did he receive for that faithfulness? They hated him for it, he ended up being confined in prison, in the courtyard, in a dungeon and down a well.

Timothy was like Jeremiah. Jeremiah - opposed by the other prophets who were saying the opposite, - thought “Lord are you sure, is this right?”

So also Paul knows the same will happened to Timothy s **But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, discharge all the duties of your ministry.** 2Ti 4:1-5

IOW. Timothy “Don’t you be knocked off course!”...please pray for me s **But you keep your head in all situations** in other words whatever is happening, keep your head - that is don’t change your thinking, - don’t change your mind – don’t compromise God’s word looking for some middle ground out of fear, so as to appease those up against you. **endure** the **hardship** that will surely come. Stands firm Stand firm, in the Lord.

- ✚ George Whitefield said, “It is the duty of pastors to preach the whole counsel of God, and not to compromise the truth before the great and

powerful men of the world; and this especially in preaching God’s judgment on the wicked and unbelieving; for in order for sinners to be saved by Christ and for the countries morals to be preserved, sinners need to know that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”

There is the truth. Salvation is about Christ’s work on the cross to rescue the guilty sinner – as you and I are. Rescue from the just condemnation to hell for all the hard in heart. Is that you? Are you refusing to turn? Please listen to these words. “**Is not my word like fire,**” declares the LORD, “**and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?**” Jer 23:29 Will it break up your hard heart? Will it penetrate? Will it break through?

Conclusion - Where that takes us

What does it mean for the person?

Knowing the truth and living the truth = good health. For truth fits like good clothing, it gives us the good mental and spiritual health that God intends.

Augustin Marlorat du Pasquier (Augustinus Marloratus) 1506–31st Oct. 1562) was a French Protestant reformer, executed on a charge of treason. He said: “Scripture is the life and light of the Church, and the Church is the guardian of Scripture. When the Church is strong, Scripture shines forth the glory of Jesus Christ the Saviour through faithful preaching and teaching; but when the Church is sick, Scripture is imprisoned by ignorance, unbelief, and false doctrine. And thus Scripture and the Church exhibit together the appearance of health, or of sickness; so that the treatment of Scripture in preaching and teaching corresponds with the state of the Church.”

So beware of those who might come in here and crash the plane. Don’t you either go out and fill you mind with easy listening the spiritual equivalent of smooth radio, ungodly listening that will steal away your love for Christ.

What does it mean for the church?

We as a church mustn’t ignore the map, soil the map, lose the map. A sure sign that you/we are Christians is that you and I stand for, and defend the truth as revealed in God’s Word. In this we are revived and others are saved.

- ✚ J.C. Ryle said, “There can be no true revival in the church apart from the faithful preaching of the Gospel in the church.”

May we be a strong church because we love and faithfully follow God’s word – So in this God is honoured and glorified. Amen. _____END