Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – March 3, 2019

**Nurturing God’s Family**

**Planting, Establishing, and Leading Local Churches**

Practical Principles from The Pastoral Letters

**“Teach well, live well.”**

**1 Timothy 4:1-16**

Just as there were false prophets in Israel, and the false christs about whom Jesus warned, the early church experienced a wave of false teachers. The specifics ranged from emphasizing myths and glorifying angels to false claims about the Law of Moses and how it should apply.

 While no two Christians ever believe precisely the same on every-thing, and churches will come to differing conclusions on even important points of doctrine, the fact remains that false teachers are NOT true followers of Jesus, and must be addressed clearly and decisively.

**What are Paul’s key points?**

✓ The Clear and Present Danger: False teachers (of the Law) tempting believers to abandon God’s creation order by restricting such things as marriage and diet. vv. 1-5

✓ The Overall Strategy: Point people to truth, refuse to participate in foolish controversy, pursue holiness. vv. 6-8

✓ The Practical Logistics:

 1. Be confident in your (gospel) proclamation. vv. 9-11

 2. Be godly in your personal life. v. 12

 3. Be persistent in your calling. v. 13-16

***What is the Big Idea?***

 *A church is established as its leaders live exemplary, godly lives and*

*fiercely oppose false teachings by contrasting them to God’s Word,*

*especially as it is revealed in the gospel.*

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***How do we apply these principles?***

***1. Wrong, or just a difference of opinion?***  While God leaves many things God to our own choices, sound doctrine is not one of them. Called “the truth,” “the deposit,” and here, “the faith,” God’s word is to be a church’s focus (1 Tim. 1:3, 4; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 1:10, 11). What are the things Paul lists that are drawing people away from truth? Why is Paul so passionate about all of this? Are these teachers naive, or purposefully deceptive? How can you tell? Why would the false teachers be targeting marriage and dietary laws?

***2. For or Against?***  Though Paul warns against false doctrines, that is not the emphasis. We are to teach what God is FOR, such as grace, mercy, and love, which He pours out freely in the gospel and which overflows into the lives of others. Why do so many think of godliness as deprivation (as in “diet”) rather than richness (think “nutrition”). If Jesus came to give us abundant life (John 10:10), why are we so tempted by the “junk food” of sin to turn away from the full spiritual nourishment at His blessed table (Eph. 1:3-12)? Is Jesus truly our “Bread of Life”? Are we satisfied in Him? John 6:35

***3. Consistency or Convenience?*** At least a dozen imperatives dot this passage, Life is not a game, nor a vacation, nor a spa. It is a boot camp where we learn the discipline of discipleship. How is this different from salvation by works, or earning God’s favor by working? What are some practical things Paul lists for spiritually staying on track? Hebrews 12:1-17