Lownes Free Church                                                                    Sunday Morning – May 12, 2019

Nurturing God’s Family   
Planting, Establishing, and Leading Local Churches  
Practical Principles from The Pastoral Letters

“Truth or Turmoil”  
Or, “You can’t win the battle if you don’t know you’re in a war.”  
2 Timothy 3:1-17

One of our greatest challenges as believers is overcoming the misconception that our lives should be easy. Jesus, echoing the history of God’s people, explained that our “normal” would be conflict, not comfort, persecution, not peace (John 15:18-21). Paul wants Timothy not to be disarmed by the tactics of the false teachers, and here explains how they work. They deceive the easily deceived, and give the godless an appearance of learning something valuable while feeding their insatiable appetite for having things their way. Rejecting truth invites turmoil.

What are Paul’s key points?   
  
✓ These last days are and will be times of turmoil, not peace. v. 1  
Jesus’ incarnation means that the prophetic “end times” already have begun.

✓ The turmoil comes from a godless, restless self-love. vv. 2-5b Man’s self-centered desires display all manner of evil and disdain for God.

✓ Avoid false teachers, knowing their schemes and end. vv. 5c-9  
Like those who temporarily opposed Moses, they deceive naive truth-rejecters.

✓ Stay true to God’s revelation, which you’ve seen me live. vv. 10-17 You have seen how God’s Truth has all you need to perform your tasks!

What is the Big Idea?

A church is sustained by leaders who grasp that living in these last days means conflict with the spirit of the age, a battle in which our weapon is Scripture and our assignment is faithfulness to it.

How do we apply these principles?

1. Are these the last days? The last days began with the coming of Jesus, according to Hebrews 1:2. Why does Paul link his “vice list” (vv. 2-5) with the last days? How is this both a warning and an encouragement? See also 1 John 2:18; 4:3.

2. Where does outward evil begin? Notice that Paul begins and ends this list with what people love or don’t love. Why is this important? List the qualities these people lack. How do these deficiencies contribute to the breakdown of a culture? Can you list some parallels with Israel’s downfall in 2 Chronicles 36:11-16?

3. How do false teachers work? Why do you think Paul points out that a key target of the false teachers are “weak women burdened with sins”? (No, he is not defaming women.) Why does he say these teachers are “creeping into houses”? What is it about our sins that make us easy prey for heretics and false teachers? Why does he say that, like the magicians, they will not get far?

4. How does Truth reveal itself? Paul reminds Timothy not only of Scripture that he knew but the lives that he had seen living that truth. Why and how can conduct of the faithful become an encouragement to Timothy (and us)? What does Paul mean when he says that Scripture is “God breathed”? What descriptive words and phrases does he use to indicate that Scripture is a sufficient resource for Timothy? How sufficient is it?