



Sermon – October 22, 2017

Verses Covered This Week

1 Timothy 6:20 – 21

Revelations 22:18

Ephesians 2:13 – 17

So in 1414 there was a council in the Catholic church called the Council of Constance. They formed it because there were two popes and there was a big mess and there was great division. And they decided to try to fix the division. At this council one of the things they did, actually they did two things, they, number one, they did three things, they did seal the division. They came up with one pope, but they did two other things. They took John Hus who declared that the Bible was bigger than the pope and that he had to answer to the Bible. The Bible held the truth, the box that Paul writes to Timothy about. And they declared him a heretic and burned him at the stake. Before Hus there was a man named John Wycliffe who had declared the same thing. They dug his bones up and burned them as well at the Council of Constance. A hundred years later Martin Luther came along. He declared the same thing after a lot of work in becoming a monk and then a priest and he settled in and finally stood against the Catholic church where they excommunicated him. And he tried to get the church to understand that the scripture was bigger than the pope. They wouldn't listen to him and so they excommunicated him. A man went to Germany in the 20th century was so moved by the story of Martin Luther and his courage that he came back and he changed his name and the name of his son; Martin Luther King, Sr. and Martin Luther King, Jr. These guys had a tremendous impact because they did the two things that Paul tells Timothy to do in 1 Timothy.

In chapter 6 he gives him the second thing he wants him to do. Now the first thing he tells him to do, he says, "Timothy I've given you a box and inside that box is not everything that's known, but everything you need to know about you and God. How you relate, how you live for Him in this world, how you deal with all the things in this world in relationship to Him. How to have a relationship with Him. I've given you a box and everything in it that you need to know for that is in there. I want you to take that box and I want you to pull everything out and deliver it to the church at Ephesus." He even says in 2 Timothy, "Get some guys, deliver the box to them so they can then take the box and continue to deliver it." So my job as pastor is to deliver that box, your job as a parent in the home is to deliver that box. That's the first thing.

And then he comes to the end of 1 Timothy, last verse basically in the book, and he tells him the second thing. Now he says it with passion. Look in verse 20. 1 Timothy 6:20. He says,

20 Timothy,

That's probably similar to what you heard in Houston last night on a last catch. "Oh, man! The 'Stros are going. Who knew?" So it's that kind of passion. O Timothy. He doesn't tell him to teach. He doesn't tell him to hold it. Look at what he says.

Guard the deposit that I've entrusted to you,

He says, "Look I want you to take what I've given you, this box, I want you to guard it." Not in the sense like you'd guard a prison, but in the sense of what we saw when we had five presidents. They were guarded by the Secret Service and our own police departments so they would come in and leave in the very same way. There would be nothing done. They would be protected. So he says, "Timothy I want you to take the deposit. I want you to do two things with it. I want you to pull it out. I want you to teach it and the second thing I want you to do is protect it." Protect it from what? Look at what he says.

Staying away from the godless, empty voices and the opposition of those so called "knowledge" which some had believed and have moved away from the faith.

He says, "Timothy I'm not worried about what the Ephesians think about the box. I don't care. I'm worried about what the church, what people inside your church are doing to the box. That's the concern." So we have two responsibilities. We're to take the truth in the box and this is that truth. You hold it in your hand. You're to take the truth of this box and pull it out and deliver it; but we're to protect it. Now what exactly does that mean? If you go to almost the last verse in the Bible, Revelation 22. I want you to listen to verse 18. Now this is virtually the last thing he says until he says, "O come Lord Jesus." But this is one of the last commands in the scripture. Listen.

¹⁸I bear witness to everybody who hears the words of this prophecy of this book. If anyone should add to these things, God shall add upon him the plagues which are written in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone should take away from the words of this book of this prophecy, God shall remove his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which is written about in this book.

Now that's how we protect it. OK. It's a real simple concept. We have to do two things. We take the box that we have in our hand, we pull it out, we give it to our children, we give it to each other. The second thing we do is we protect it. We don't allow anything added in it, we don't allow anything removed from it, in other words, that we don't use. This is exactly what Jesus Christ said when he said, "Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees took away from it; 39 books in the Old Testament, they only believed in the first five. Didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. So they took away from what was in there. They looked in and said, "Yeah, we're good with these five books, but these other 34, we're going to hold in here. We're never pulling them out because we don't accept them." So they took away from it. The Pharisees added to it. You had this statement in there, they pulled out, and said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." And they added 5,000 different regulations. There were a number

of steps that you were allowed to take on the Sabbath day. They must have all had Fitbits. When the guy would go, “Oh, baby, can’t come help you with the meal. I’ve got ten steps left.” Hit the recliner, turn on the TV, and go “I need some tea, please.” So apparently that was the case. So they added things into the box. So we’re not allowed to ignore anything in the box, and we’re not allowed to add things in the box. That is how we protect it. We pull what’s in it, whether we understand it or like it, and we deal with it. We don’t bring anything else into it. We don’t ignore anything inside it. We protect it.

This has been the issue for the enemy from day one because he’s always gone after some part of the book. There was a time years ago when he went after Genesis 1 – 11. I mean we were made fun of and mocked because we believed God created the world in six days in 24 hour periods and He rested on the seventh. And now we know we’ve evolved and we’re time and chance. There’s no purpose in our existence and we’re just lucky to be here and all this stuff. And we evolved from apes and monkeys and cows and pigs and dogs. So thank God cats I’ve never seen in the evolutionary scale there. Even pagan scientists know they don’t belong. So at any rate, but that really isn’t so much the issue today because God has raised up some academically credentialed creation scientists. A few have come along and said, “You know what? When you examine the evidence there’s every reason to believe in design in the universe.” So we still kind of face that battle, but that’s really kind of on the back burner. When I came up the battle was over whether or not this book was true. I mean the big debate in our convention, as a matter of fact in 1979 we fought every seminary, when I came out of seminary, the only conservative seminary we had was Southwestern, and even it was moving into a very liberal bent. In ’79 we started moving in the Southern Baptist Convention and we established where today all six seminaries, you cannot teach in a single seminary if you do not sign a paper that says you believe this book is absolutely, totally, and completely true. I’ve shared with you I had a guy in college that told me that one of our profs from Southern Seminary who said God, he didn’t believe in Satan, hell, angels, or demons. That those were products of a primitive culture. It’s what Paul thought what everybody believed in that day so Paul talked as if they were real. But we’re smart enough now, we’re in the 20th century, we know that’s not true. And so he debunked a great deal of the Bible and yet if you asked him in class, “Do you believe the Bible’s true?” He’d say, “Oh absolutely.” So we fought that, won it, we’re the only denomination that ever did that. The Methodists have been overcome by the lack of truth in the scripture. The Presbyterians have been overcome. The Episcopalians have been overcome. The only denomination that ever won the battle for the Bible is the Southern Baptist Convention. So we’ve stood strong. I get that. We had to fight that. And there’s always something that we have to defend. And it’s always from within. The battle for the Bible was from within. Even the battle for evolution was from within.

We fight a different battle today. And it’s from within. But it’s an interesting battle. It’s a unique battle. And I fear that it’s winning the day. When I was born in Tennessee, we went from Tennessee to Georgia, Colorado, Louisiana, Alabama, Louisiana, Alabama, College of Mississippi, Seminary in Texas. So basically four years almost everywhere I lived. And so we went to different Southern Baptist churches all the way from Tennessee to Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Colorado. Now when you went to church, Southern Baptist church, in the ‘50’s and ‘60’s it didn’t matter what state you were in. You could be in Colorado. You could be in Tennessee. All services were the same. Every church service was the same. There was a quick opening little song. The pastor got up, long pastoral prayer, if you’d had a long Saturday night

you had to fight staying awake there. Then the music director would get up, it wasn't a worship leader, it was a music director. And he would get up and he would say, "Turn to hymn 29." And then he would, is that right? Have I got that? Eat that! So. I didn't realize I could do your job. Yeah, yeah, that would be a blessing. So we'd sing a couple hymns. Always, for y'all my age what were the verses? First and fourth. Never the third. Because for some reason three was an evil number. Don't know. But that was the belief in the Southern Baptist Convention. So we didn't sing the third verse. When you finished a couple songs, then someone would stand up and sing a solo. And then the pastor would mount the pulpit. Now what he would do is he would not, and there are probably some exceptions, but generally he would not text preach. What he would do is find some metaphor he'd seen during the week, like a stop light, and say, "There are times in life when you have a red light. Times in life when you have a yellow light. Times in life when you have a green light." And he would take that metaphor and then find some scriptures to back up the metaphor. That was the preaching. And then you had long invitations. Now the only distinction was if you were in a rich Baptist church or a non-rich Baptist church. There was one distinction. If you were in a rich Baptist church, you had a massive pipe organ that cost more than you gave to Lottie Moon in 30 years. If you were a poor Baptist church, you had an organ on the side. That's the only difference. Churches in that day, a lot of times, did what we would term classical music; high, difficult to understand, music. Christmas we didn't have worship times. We had what? Cantata. There's an old person right there. Cantatas. We had all that stuff. Every church was the same.

So in 1965 a guy came along, Donald McGavran, and started a movement. And he was right in his assessment. He said, "The church has got to adapt in its methodology to its culture." And all of a sudden the focus was our churches, by doing this same worship all the time every Sunday, are beginning to decline. So he said, "We need to make sure we are growing. We should be impacting our communities. We should be growing. And so we need to alter what we're doing so we can attract people in the community and make disciples of the community." Now that really does sound good. And the concept is right. I get that. But somewhere there's a shift that's occurred where the younger generation of pastors that I meet with are all coming up with the bent that my job in planting a church is to get in a community and get a bunch of people to come into my building and if I get a bunch of people to come into my building, then I am successful as a pastor. And that has become the driving mantra. And that driving mantra of numbers vs. disciples is causing us to take this book and ignore any teaching that would hinder the numbers. Now I like the change in worship. Because when I grew up, basically the real distinction between '50's and '60's worship and what we do here is not the songs. It's not. And it's not the style. You know what the real distinction is? When I grew up you watched worship. But what we do today is we don't sing about Him with each other. We sing to Him with each other. We engage in worship. And that's the brilliance and I totally love that. But we've come to a place now, it's not the worship aspect, it's worshipping in the word where we've come to the place now where pastors are looking and they know if they reach in and pull this teaching out and hand it, that they will lose some of the people sitting out there. And so they put that teaching back in there and only pull out the teaching that will keep people in the seats which seems to be the exact opposite of what the end of Revelation says to do. I'm not protecting the word when I care more about the numbers than the truth.

There is a huge distinction, for example, I was talking, I taught a couple Tuesdays ago these young men in the D-Min cohort again, I had them for three hours and we were talking and at the break one of the guys, Jesse, a really great guy, came up to me and we use this pastor's name, Bob, but he went to Bob's church in Dallas which is a really great church, well-known church, really good, I know the pastor he was talking about. But he said it killed him because his daughter goes to church, and he said, "I went to the church." He said, "Bob preached about Sodom and Gomorrah." Now it's pretty clear, really tough statement in that you have two angels show up to the house and the men in the city want to engage physically with those angels and so God eventually judges the city. Now the liberal take, which is what Bob did in this particular sermon, I said, "Jesse are you sure?" He said, "I was there." The take of Bob was that God judged Sodom and Gomorrah because they weren't hospitable. It's nothing about hospitality there, but it is, if you don't really, really pull out the truth. And the fact is we need to be fully orb'd. The Bible's really clean and clear. So let me just get this out there. The Bible says this about physical intimacy. It has an umbrella, he pulls it out, here's what the Bible says. It's only between a man and a woman. It's only between man and a woman who have, in front of people and God, made a covenant with each other where they have put rings on as symbols that we are committed to this relationship no matter what. And that we're going to stay in this until only death separates us and we're locked in this covenant and inside this covenant we'll be physical intimate only with each other and only inside this covenant. And that any violation of that is a violation of what the Creator's best for us is. It's His design. He loves us. So His best for us is to operate under this. But if you say that in certain churches, which apparently this is one, and you say that is between a man and a woman inside a God-based covenant, that you make a promise to each other until you die, there are a ton of people that aren't going to like that. And so we don't do it. We put it down there and we pull up and say, "You know, it's about hospitality." That's today. And so the battle we face today from within is a rising generation of young pastors whose agenda based on this church growth movement is, "My job is to grow my church by limiting the truth that's in the box." Or ignoring that truth.

Now I've walked through this before, but I want to show you something. Go to the book of Ephesians chapter 2. I want you to look at verse 14 and walk with me down this passage. Now listen to Ephesians 2:14. As a matter of fact, look in verse 13.

¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have become near

What's that next phrase? What's that next clause, that prepositional phrase? What does it say? In the blood of Christ. And when he says, "you who were far away become near" who's he talking to? Gentiles or Jews? He's talking to the Gentiles. They were far away. What Paul did in Ephesus is what he did everywhere. He stepped into the town, went up to the synagogue and said, "Hey I'm a Jewish Rabbi." He was well-known. He studied under Gamaliel. And they said, "Would you speak?" And so he would get up and read Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 and walk them through the Old Testament. And inevitably he would pull a group out, which he did in Ephesus, of Jewish Christians and go over and plant a church. And in that process the Jewish Christians would step out, as Paul would, and was in Ephesus, remember, for a year and a half, three years, and he would get out there and he would begin to bring Gentiles into the church. So now you've got a church with Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Now watch this.

14For He is our peace, the One who has made the both one and the middle wall partition He has destroyed, 15the enmity in His flesh, the Law of commandments and decrees, He's nullified that the two might become one in Him, one new man, by making peace, 16He reconciled both in one body to God through the cross, by having destroyed the enmity in Himself. 17And He preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who are near;

Now let me ask you something. You've got a guy here in Ephesus, right. He and his family; guy, wife, couple kids. They grew up their whole life in a Jewish synagogue. OK. You've got a Gentile guy, maybe he's married, maybe he's divorced, he's got a couple kids. He's never been, (a) in a church, because Ephesus is the first church ever, and he certainly never been in a synagogue because the Romans hated the Jews and the Jews hated the Romans. So now it's Sunday morning; Paul's led him to Christ on Monday. He comes in on Sunday morning. He's in the church with his family. These guys are in the church with their families. Now let's just ask a couple questions here. Are they going to have the same clothes on? These guys, the women here are going to be very, very modest. They're going to be covered from here to the ankles. They're going to be extremely modest. That's the Jewish way. Remember what Paul wrote earlier in the book? Remember he told the women in the church at Ephesus, he said, "Timothy you tell them to dress, what, modestly." Because these women have never known modesty. They've never been taught that. The Roman world was vile morally. So they're coming into the church with short skirts and showing everything and they're not modest. And so here we are inside the same room. So they're not dressed the same. These guys have grown up with what kind of preaching? Hard, lengthy, prophesorial, didactic teaching. You're taking laborious notes; you're writing down all these words. These guys have grown up under the peripatetic philosophers. The rhetoricians. The orators of the day. Cicero has just died a few years before; maybe a hundred years before. He's still known. These guys were brilliant, gifted speakers, clever, funny, witty. That's what they've grown up with. Music. There's some energy in the Jewish life. But it's, its' hymns man. It's Michael Bublé. These guys; Eminem, Coldplay, maybe Lecrae. These guys. So you're getting these two groups in the church, right. And you're putting them in the same worship service. What's going to happen? Oh, I guarantee you they're just like us. I guarantee you what's going to happen. If one Sunday the preacher gets excited in the pulpit and starts going nuts the Gentiles are going to be going, "Yeah, baby! Great sermon!" The Jewish Christians are going to go, "I really felt you were overwrought today pastor." That's what's going to happen. If the worship is a little cranked up, these guys are going to be going, "Whoop!" If it's a little dead, these guys are going to go, "That's much more dignified today, Steve." These guys are going to want a pastor in a robe. These guys are going to want skinny jeans. It ain't ever happening! Let's just be clear. See there's the Gentiles. There's the Jews clapping right there. "Well praise God he's not doing that!" So you put these in the same worship service what happens? After a while Timothy, on Monday morning, is sitting with his staff going, "I can't take it anymore. I'm putting my resume out to Corinth. They've got to be better than this place, man. These people whine and gripe every Sunday."

Now what if one of Timothy's deacons says, "Hey, I can fix this. As a matter of fact I can do two things. I can shut up the whining and I can increase attendance. Because I guarantee you, some of the people will quit coming." Now if you're Timothy you're going to look at him and go, "How?" He's going to say, "I'll tell you what we'll do. At 11:00 o'clock we'll have a Gentile Christian worship service. Pastor can change clothes. We'll have an 8:30 Jewish worship service."

He'll wear a robe and he'll take that off and have his skinny jeans on for the 11:00 o'clock. Steve will change the worship style in both. And Chris will be a little more loud here and a little more subdued here." Do you think that that's OK to divide the Jewish and the Gentile Christians when Paul says, as a matter of fact, the most sacred thing in the universe is the blood of Jesus Christ. He just said that it is the most sacred thing in the universe that makes the two one, making peace. That the blood of the Savior is more important than the style of the worship. And if that's the case would not dividing the church be a repudiation of all that the blood stands for? So when I drive through town anywhere and I come to a church and it says, "Contemporary Worship 11:00. Traditional Worship 8:30." We're not even struggling with Jews and Gentiles. We're struggling with Legacy Adults and College Students. We can't even get ourselves together because the blood of Jesus is not as important to us as what song we want to sing and how we want to sing it. And here's what really kills me. It kills me that churches all over are violating because what they're saying is, "We know the blood brings us together, but we'll have larger numbers and less complaining if we do this." Let me be clear. The most important tenant in the box is the redemption of the blood of Jesus Christ and all the consequences that stem from that and when I repudiate that, I've repudiated the sinner of the box itself. And here's what drives me crazy. You can take Legacy Adults and college students for six hours at a Texas A&M football game; unified, screaming, hollering, going nuts because apparently a football game that accomplishes nothing for eternity is more valuable in our heart than the blood of our Savior. And that is absolutely wrong! We have got to redemonstrate that we don't care about numbers. What we care about is opening the box, bringing it out, and making sure we protect it. That we don't take away from it, we don't add to it, we're clear with what it says, all the way down to the truths that bother us and unnerve us. It's the last thing he says, "Tim, grace be with you." Because the only hope of grace is in the blood of Jesus Christ. It's not a feeling of God. It's what He enacted when He let Jesus' blood be poured out on the cross. That is the most precious thing we have. I don't care what style of worship we have. I don't care if we like or don't like the songs. It's the Savior we're singing to. It's about Him and the Savior should be important in any style; anything we do. We really do need to come back. That the blood is bigger than any football game. Always.

Let's pray.

Father let us hold Your book, let us protect Your book in our homes, in our church, let our kids, when they grow up in our homes see us demonstrate that we don't care what the style of worship is, we just adore our Savior. Let our kids feel that in the home. Let them experience that in the home. And Father let Your grace wrap itself all around us so that at the end of the day we understand your blood is way bigger and better than anything else in this universe. Thank You, Jesus, for shedding it. It is in your name we pray.