

# Discussion of "The Purpose of the Church: Proclaiming Truth"

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[ 0 : 00 ] The text from this morning was 1 Timothy 3, verses 14-16.

! I'm going to read that just to remind us what the text was before we go through these questions. Again, focusing on the purpose of the church, and today focusing specifically on the church's purpose to proclaim the truth.

1 Timothy 3, verses 14-16. I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness. He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

So the first question that we have tonight to discuss is, what are the consequences when a church forgets that it belongs to Christ?

[ 1 : 13 ] I have a microphone up here, and Josiah has graciously volunteered to be the mic man. So what are the consequences when a church forgets that it belongs to Christ?

Doylene over here. Josiah, thank you, sir. When you read this this morning, I immediately thought about the churches that are addressed in the Revelation.

And so just quickly, when I look at the headings that, you know, the Bible prints in between some of these, you know, there's a loveless church, the persecuted church, which was good. But then there's the compromising church, the corrupt church, the dead church, and then we just see another faithful church.

And then the lukewarm church, where Jesus is outside, and they don't even recognize him, representing a church that probably doesn't even have a single believer in worshiping.

And so you get away from the gospel, you get away from Christ. It's unthinkable, and it's got to hurt God.

[ 2 : 26 ] Yeah. I know he doesn't have emotions like we do, but how people could do that to him is unfathomable to me. Yeah. So let's stick to the truth.

Amen. Amen. Thank you. Amen. And that's, there's a great book that John MacArthur wrote, I think it's called Christ's Call to Reform the Church.

It's not very big, but it's all about those seven churches and going through each one. And, you know, there were warnings for these churches. As Doylene said, each one was failing, not everyone, but most of them were failing in a certain way, and there was a warning.

From the Lord to those churches to repent and to change their ways. Otherwise, what? Your lampstand will be removed. So the consequences are that if a church forgets that it belongs to Christ, it's time as a church will eventually come to an end.

And that's something that should break our hearts, and that's something that we should take very seriously, you know, because it does grief him, and he won't stand for it for long.

[ 3 : 44 ] And so, if the church who's lost its way isn't convicted by that and reforms to get back to what it's supposed to be, then the time will come when the Lord will remove its lampstand.

And we go back to, again, to the illustration from this morning of Josiah, and he reformed the nation. He was leading the nation to reform, and then he dies, and, you know, those who replace him just go right back into what they were doing before.

And eventually, the Lord removes the nation of Judah, and he already removed the nation of Israel, because they would not heed his warnings.

They would not serve his purposes. And so, they were to be a light to the nation, and then for a time, that light was removed or dispersed into other places.

So, there are consequences, and, you know, the major one being that you, as a church, will have your lampstand removed.

[ 4 : 54 ] I don't think the Lord cares about losing real estate, if that makes sense. You know, he's not going to have his name attached to a church that is not proclaiming what it's supposed to, not standing what it's supposed to be standing for, not making disciples, forgetting that they belong to him.

They will be removed. Ted had his hand up right here, Josiah. Aptly named. Aptly named. Aptly. Because of Josiah, you know. Correct me if I'm wrong, but when I think about the lampstand, we see all these mega so-called churches, you know, got a great attendance and everything, but there's no message there, really.

Just, you know, feel good and stuff like that. To me, the lampstand has been removed, even though people see this, but you're not seeing God's Word preached or seeing people come to the Lord or their life really being changed because of this.

Am I right? Yeah, I think, and we've noticed that in Scripture, sometimes God's wrath is instant and sometimes it's happening, but it's slow in happening as far as we regard time.

[ 6 : 23 ] Uh-huh. Yeah. Well, and it goes back to also that, you know, the nation had forgotten God's Word.

They'd lost it. They didn't even know it was lost. They'd forgotten it. And I think in some of these churches, we see the same thing too, is they are convinced that they are drawing large crowds and it seems like God is at work in those places, but if they are not proclaiming His truth, then their time is going to come to an end at some point.

Any other answers for this question? What are the consequences when a church forgets that it belongs to Christ? Are there consequences as individual believers, do you think?

Not just we know that some churches will have their lampstand removed, but if people are going to a church where the leaders have forgotten that it belongs to Christ, you know, what are the consequences for those who go to church there?

Well, they're not hearing the gospel. They're hearing maybe Scripture referenced, but not really being dug into, really being taught.

[ 7 : 42 ] And so I think we see a lot of that. There's a lot of shallow believers out there who, you know, and again, I think it goes back to the issue of biblical illiteracy.

We have a lot of people who don't know what Scripture says. And we have a lot of people who, they can kind of like reference it a little bit.

Like, doesn't the Bible say something about that? And they're just, you know, or they'll kind of get it half right, but not totally right. Or maybe they will, but they don't know where, what part of Scripture even, I think, maybe it comes from.

And that was an eye-opening conversation that I had recently with some people, not here, but people who I was just surprised how little they knew about Scripture.

Just, again, kind of referencing it vaguely. And that was surprising to me. But, again, it just points out back here to Wes that we are suffering in our nation with many Christians who just don't know the Bible very well because they just don't take the time to actually read their Bible and study their Bible.

[ 9 : 04 ] Wes? I was going to say lost souls, so people that aren't really being taught the true gospel, they think they're saved because of whatever the current church is that they're preaching to them.

They think they're saved and they're going about their business thinking, hey, I'm cool. And in reality, depart from me. I never knew you. Yeah. Yeah, a lot of easy believism.

Up here to Mike, Josiah, please. Mike. Yeah, easy believism. You know, say this prayer, walk forward, do this thing.

It's all good. You've taken care of that salvation thing. And not really talking about sin. Not really talking about the need to repent. What all is involved when genuine salvation takes place.

Mike. I think we as a nation are beginning to see the consequences of what the churches will go through. Like I say, God will not put up with it. He's going to bring persecution, which we should say thank you, Lord, because he's going to purify his church.

[10:10] And whether that means to destroy it totally and rebuild it, or if he will take the remnant and build from there. But I believe we are seeing the consequences here.

It's getting bad and only going to get worse. Yeah. So I think it's come alive to us. Yeah. You think we're seeing more divisions within the church taking place?

I mean, I'm not talking about like within the church divisions, kind of like this morning how if there's conflict. But I'm talking about like between different denominations and where they're lining up around behind certain issues.

Aren't we seeing that it's becoming clearer who is moving more towards, I think, the ways of the world and who is moving more towards the things of God?

I think that's becoming clearer and clearer as the Lord refines his church. And it becomes more clear, okay, who believes that the Bible is God's word or who merely references it?

[11:16] But really what they believe is based upon their opinions and their feelings and their thoughts. Cameron. I think Mike's got it right.

I mean, when you look at God's judgment, especially, you know, we were kind of talking about this morning, especially the last half of Romans 1, God's judgment sometime isn't, you know, it's not hurricanes, it's not fires, it's not plagues.

Sometimes God's judgment is just, hey, I'm just going to pull back and let you humans be humans. And, you know, it says giving over to a debased mind. When you look around at everything that's happening, especially here in our culture in the U.S., it's hard not to say that's a debased mind.

And people think, you know, violets and riots and that we can, you know, overthrow our Capitol building, we can burn down city blocks to get our point across, we can, you know, do all this stuff. And we just see this constant division and hate. And it's easy to see that that's the consequences of the church getting away from Christ. Because the church is no longer being the moral stronghold that our country needs.

[12:33] The church has moved away from Christ. It's all about, well, we just have to love people and whatever happens, happens. And so you see the American church, like we've kind of talked about having that watered-down gospel or just that we just have to love people and love God and that's it.

And when the true gospel is not being taught, then we're going to be punished for it. And so I think you easily look at our country and you just see the last half of Romans 1.

Yeah, for sure. Yolanda? Yeah, part of God's wrath is a withholding of His grace. And He's, I think we're seeing that, a withholding of God's grace as people turn from Him, away from Him, reject Him.

And part of His, the consequence of His withholding His grace is that people are given over to a depraved mind. Which we're seeing. Yolanda?

Well, plus, like in the end times, at the end, we're going to have to answer to God. The preachers were preaching the wrong word. They were not preaching what they're supposed to and the rest of us, the members, because we have the word.

[13:48] And we should have been reading on our own and not listening to what the preachers, if they're preaching wrong. So we're going to have, the church will have to answer to God. Yeah, I think we see that a lot too, just a lack of courage on the part of those who do know the truth to proclaim it for fear of stirring the pot or whatever, making people feel uncomfortable.

I read this, somebody posted this quote from Dave Ramsey, and I'm thinking that it must be him. But he was talking about, we're talking about the depraved mind, and I think he's said some things that, it's kind of long, but, I think that he hits on, you know, what we're seeing right now in our culture.

Let me read it to you. He said, You can't justify this insanity. We have become a nation that has lost its collective mind. We see our countries going socialist and collapse.

We see other countries going socialist and collapsing, but it seems like a great plan. Oh, what did I do? There we go. Seems like a great plan to us.

Somehow it's un-American for the census to count how many Americans are in America. People who say there is no such thing as gender or demanding a female president. Universities that advocate equality discriminate against Asian Americans.

[15:15] And it did it to me again. I'm not going to keep doing it if it does it to me one more time. People who say there is, okay, I got that part. Some people are held responsible for things that

happened before they were born, and other people are not held responsible for what they are doing right now.

Criminals are caught and released to hurt more people, but stopping them is bad because it's a violation of their rights. People who have never owned slaves should pay slavery reparations to people who have never been slaves.

After legislating gender, if a dude pretends to be a woman, you are required to pretend with him.

And then he says some other things, but I just felt like, you know, it is.

We see things don't make sense in our world and what they're saying. I mean, there's so many contradictions. It's clear that we've been given over to a depraved mind as punishment for our sins, the nation's sins.

Let's move on to question number two. How does the church serve as a pillar and buttress of truth?

If the truth we have been assigned to proclaim is forgotten, what will the church become?

[16:25] So let's focus on the first part. What does the church, how does the church serve as a pillar and buttress of truth? So we see, it was talked about, we've got a nation, it's been given over to a depraved mind where the truth hasn't been exchanged for a lie.

And so how do we as a church serve right now in our time as a pillar and buttress of truth? It helps to remember what a pillar and a buttress does.

Back here to Cameron, right? It upholds, supports. Yeah, it's a foundation. We don't change.

Yeah. We just stick with the Bible. The Bible doesn't change with the times. Truth doesn't change with the times. Facts don't change with the times.

If any time we start changing to adjust to our culture, we're no longer a pillar. We're then something built on sand that's going to collapse.

[17:29] We've got to build on that firm foundation so that the pillar can hold. So we've got to not change with the times. We've got to hold strong and remember that the Bible is first and foremost that gives us our truth, not our culture around us.

Good. So like a pillar, we're steady. We're steady. We're steady. We're not changing the truth.

We're not watering it down. We're not ignoring the parts that maybe are really offensive to people.

You know, if you saw a pillar wobbling, you wouldn't feel very good about its ability to support anything. Or if you saw cracks within it, that would be another thing that would disturb you to stand underneath whatever it was supposedly holding up.

So yeah, we're steady. We stay steady. God's word hasn't changed. His truth hasn't changed. And even if culture has changed and they like it less and less, we remain steady, continuing to declare that this is the truth, no matter what the world is trying to tell us.

And no matter what ways they're trying to silence us, and also when we see other churches saying things that contradict the word of God, then we have a responsibility too to be steady and to call it out, you know, to speak the truth in love, but to point out that this is wrong.

[19:08] Wes? I was just going to say something along that same line that it's good that we stay steady and not change, but to call out when we see things morally that are going wrong in our nation or in our neighborhoods or whatever, but just to stand up and say something, not to just sit back and be quiet.

It's like, well, I'm not changing the way I am. We need to, and I don't want to say confront, but we do need to stand against society as it's continuing to do the things it does. We need to stand out as that pillar by saying, no, that was wrong.

No, we shouldn't be killing babies. You know, say something about it instead of just sitting back quiet and we're going to be okay and hunker down in our bunker here, you know, and just wait for Jesus to come.

Learn this one at Voice of the Martyrs where they talk about, you got to go out. You got to go out.

You just can't just wait for the end times to happen and we're going to be okay because we know Jesus. All right, up here to Kendra.

Good point because I think that it is easy for us to gather as a church in our building and talk about all the problems of the world and what's wrong with the world, but also as being the church, we know we are the church outside of this building and to be a pillar and a buttress of truth means that you are a person of the truth wherever you go and that you're willing and ready to share that truth in a loving way, right?

[ 20 : 32 ] Because our mission isn't to win arguments but to make disciples. Kendra? I was going to emphasize the importance of if we are the church, not the building, but we as the people, we have to abide in Christ and in His Word and if we are going to stand up against what is not true, we have to have been in the Word to be ready to not speak our opinion or our soapbox of whatever, but to speak truth from the Word, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and if we are expecting just the pastor to speak from the pulpit, then we're missing out on what we are called to do as individuals of the body of Christ to abide in Him and be part of that voice as well.

Yeah, great point. This is something for all of us, not just professional Christians, but for all believers to speak and proclaim the truth, to make disciples.

and it falls on all of us to do that and to support one another in that as well. So, you know, you just think practically and I think part of, you know, with what Kendra was saying, I was thinking too about how important it is that we, I think you were saying this, live what we proclaim.

Proclaim. You know, if we're just proclaiming but they don't see the example, unbelievers, of our lives, then what we have to say isn't going to carry any weight.

So we're proclaiming the truth not just with what we say but with how we live and that's important to remember. And the second part, if the truth we have been assigned to proclaim is forgotten, what will the church become?

[ 22 : 38 ] So, what have you noticed in churches that you know have lost the way and aren't really preaching the gospel? What have they become to you?

What have you seen? Okay, go to, how about Wes back here just so I will make it easy for you and then you'll come back around to Cameron. I had this answer from this morning.

Church becomes just a building or a club so people are coming to feel good that they're with their friends and doing the different things that they might be doing. Shirley and I have been to a few other mega churches and we would meet people and they didn't even know the other people sitting around them.

It's like, well, y'all have been coming here for years. Like, you didn't even know this other person that we went with to go to their church? I mean, there's so many people and it's just like it's a social gathering and the church itself just becomes just a building.

Where they all happen to meet their clubhouse, you might say. Good. So it just becomes about fellowship. Now, fellowship is a part of being the church but our fellowship is based upon the truth, right?

[ 23 : 48 ] The gospel that we believe that has saved us. But without that, it becomes just like a club, you know, like a country club or you name it.

Just a place to be seen in C. Cameron. I agree. C and BC.

It was, my answer was basically the same thing and I'll never forget in college on one of our soccer trips, we were gonna go, we were down for a tournament in Dallas and we were gonna go to a church and I have no idea what church we went to or anything but, you know, I remember our coach telling us, hey, we're gonna get up, we're gonna go to church and it's like, okay, cool.

We drive up to this place and this place was easier, easily bigger than our mall and I remember driving up to this huge building and for us being, you know, a college soccer team so we're 25 plus, you know, college age guys so, you know, you kind of think you're gonna create a stir or whatever and it's like, we went totally unnoticed and the one thing I will never forget is walking into this place, I mean, it literally looked like you were walking into a mall because there was like this huge like kid zone, bright lights and everything and then literally on the left is a Starbucks.

Like they had a Starbucks in the lobby of their church and so, it was literally more like walking into a mall and then going into like a concert more than it was a church and I remember sitting there listening to the pastor and I don't think I remember him even referencing one Bible verse through his whole sermon and going, you know, he comes out there in his, you know, jeans and brand new Nikes and they had like a BMW parked up on stage and I was just like, what is this?

[ 25 : 40 ] You know, this isn't church, this is a cool hangout place, you know, and so, I think, Wes nailed it, it's just a place for people to hang out, it makes them feel good, they kind of check a box and they, you know, go unchanged in their life, so, I'll never forget that experience.

Why was there a BMW that they ever, no idea, not giving it away or anything? He never talked about it, but, you know, there was just like a BMW parked up on the stage, one side of the stage, I mean, was the band and, you know, they had all the newest equipment and there was lights

everywhere and, you know, I just, I don't know if they were just trying to show off how big and fancy their church was, but I'll never forget the BMW parked up on stage.

All right, back here to Wes. Just for a big show so they can bring people in, you know, so that's their latest stunt, so they would bring in, you know, Ferraris and they had a tank on the stage for several weeks and that's just to pull people in and it's a show.

Yeah, I was going to say, I was going to bring him up because he's done a lot of things on stage to draw eyeballs. I know, I think one time, didn't he bring like a live tiger? He was in a cage, but it was supposed to be some kind of sermon illustration, but I think to Cameron's point, I'm sure that those who went in and left, what did they remember about that message was the tiger or the BMW, but not really anything else.

I think he also, he had a series about, it was supposed to be, I think it was like David and Goliath and wrestling or something like that and so he interviewed a lot of professional wrestlers who, from what I remember, none of them were born again or professing to be believers and so I remember thinking too, that's interesting.

[ 27 : 45 ] He also spent the night on the top of the church building with his wife for I think a while and it was all to try to get the word out that they were going to begin a series on marriage, I think.

So, I don't know, it's just like some of those things too, it's just, what's the, what's the motivation there? Is it really to proclaim truth or to just draw attention and so it can become a social club if it's forgotten the truth that it's supposed to proclaim, the assignment from our Lord becomes a social club, becomes a place where people are entertained.

It's, what else have we seen churches to become who have forgotten this? Ben? Ben? Ben? It may be pretty simple to say this but just the opposite.

I mean, if the church is supposed to be the place where the truth is proclaimed, the opposite is that the church would become a place where lies are proclaimed, where people rely upon themselves instead of relying upon the person of Jesus Christ for their own salvation.

And so, I think that we see that, we've seen that in the emergent church, we've seen that in, you know, in the prosperity gospel, where people have turned away from the truth of what the gospel really is and they've believed, I can do this.

[ 29 : 19 ] If I just have enough faith, God is going to bless it and I'm going to, you know, I'm going to be blessed through that. So, I think that that's, there's a real danger for the church. Yeah, it becomes, I mean, honestly, the church can become a tool of Satan.

That's a great point and a scary one, too, because haven't we seen that? You know, where, like Ben said, the church, the focus becomes not on Christ, but on the person in the pew.

You know, you can do it. You're good enough. God loves you despite whatever sin you've committed. And it becomes more of like a therapy session where the pastor serves less as a proclaimer of truth and more of like a counselor or a therapist to try to, you know, encourage the people that the answer is within themselves and that's never a message that scripture preaches.

I was going to ask you too, because you guys were, you guys, and I don't know if, I don't think I asked you this question, but you guys have been in China for 10 years. I know this stuff was all going on beforehand, but have you noticed when you came back, and I know you guys were still in touch with what was going on in the States, but did you notice it even getting progressively worse since that time?

I think that, so we watched the American Gospel series as well, and I think that, honestly, I was shocked by some of the things that I heard in it because I didn't know that that was happening in America.

[ 30 : 58 ] I didn't know that that was happening. I think that we saw in China that America was exporting this prosperity gospel. We were seeing that beginning to be something within the church in China, but yeah, I don't know that we were as aware as how much it has spread.

I was going to say one thing that I might not have noticed that, but over a decade, as we had volunteer teams come out, we tended to be a safe place for the pastor to unload because we're not with their church, and so I would say it progressively got worse over 10 years as pastors would say, this is what I'm dealing with, this is what I'm dealing with, that as we heard them burden themselves with the challenges of the church back in America, it became more of a common thread that we were hearing, so we kind of saw maybe a different part of it.

And I think one, quickly, one other thing was as we would come back to visit every few years, three, four years, we would visit different churches, and I remember sitting through messages and just,

like I would squeeze Kendra's leg, and she knew exactly what it was, I was just crying out, preach the gospel, what are we here for?

Preach the gospel, we're not here to hear, you know, Reader's Digest, we're not here to hear your thoughts on the events of the day, or we want to hear the gospel, and that is what people need, people need to hear the truth of the gospel, and that's what the church is, that's what they're supposed to be centered on, and so we kept seeing that over and over again, where it wasn't, yeah, there was, there was one church that in their, their business meeting, that somebody got up and said, we don't care what the Bible says, we're going to do this, I mean, things like that, just shocking, goodness gracious, and I think to your guys' point too, how important it is then as a church that we make sure that that doesn't infiltrate, here in our body, you know, that even with, and with the sermons, I know it's been mentioned before, and with whoever is preaching to us, I mean, you guys need to make sure that, you know, what I'm saying or who, whatever anybody else who preaches is saying is matching what scripture says, and that it's the gospel that they're preaching and not something else, and, you know, in Sunday school classes or in any kind teaching ministry that our church is doing, that that is clear, that we preach the gospel, we preach Christ crucified, that we're not ashamed of that, and especially in our business meetings, if we're making decisions that, you know, may that never be for our church that anybody would say, well, we don't care what the Bible says.

[ 34 : 15 ] I had a friend who, and I don't even remember what the situation was in his church, but there was some situation, and he was handling the matter and using scripture to do it, and it must have been a business meeting because that seems to be the place where the drama unfolds, and he had stated the problem, and this is what scripture says, this is what I think we should do, and he was at the door, I think, afterwards, and I think it was a deacon, or somebody in the church came by and was upset, and he, I think he had his Bible with him, just kind of like this, and the guy, like, punched it into him, and it was said something, you know, like, you and that book, or something like that.

I can't even remember what it was, but it was just one of those stories where you're just like, your jaw hits the ground, and you're like, what in the world? the world. So, we, you know, this is really important that we make sure that what's being proclaimed is the word of God because, we'll get the microphone to Willard, because everything else, I mean, this is God's word.

This is what brings salvation. This is what brings transformation. Whatever we have to say is nothing compared to what God's word has for us, the word that we need to hear. Willard?

Another sign of this, I believe, is that church will become what it's going to become in accordance to how the church views the pastor.

I've, I've, I've, through the years, recognized the fact that a lot of churches are losing the reality that the pastor is God's man.

[ 36 : 01 ] Hmm. He's God's messenger to the people. He's called them. God's called them in. And I'm supposing it's a God-called, spirit-led pastor.

But we've become so familiar with the pastor. He's a good friend, which he ought to be. And he's just like us.

Now, be careful with that because he is to an extent. But he's still God's called man with God's message.

And if he's God's called man with God's called message, I need to hear what he says. Hmm. And I need to do what he says. Hmm.

Amen? Amen. So don't, don't, I don't want to hear you say you're fallible. All right? Even though you are.

[ 36 : 59 ] Because you're Kansas City Chiefs. Yeah. But you see what I'm saying? Yeah. That's what I'm saying. The word of God is infallible. So many churches come to the point where they can give or take what the pastor's preaching.

Yeah. You know, without any recognition that this is God's message to me because it's God's man who has been led by the Spirit of God to preach what he's preaching. Yeah.

Yeah. I know it. I know what you mean. The word of God is infallible. And so the one proclaiming it is proclaiming an infallible truth. And I, there was a couple times early on for me in ministry where I'd almost apologize for something I was going to say that was in God's word that would be offensive.

And there's a couple times where, you know, people I respected in the church would come to me and be like, don't do that. You know, you don't have anything to be, to apologize for. That's God's word and that's what it says and that's what we need to hear.

And that was really encouraging for me to hear them say that. John? Well, I thought of just two words for that second question is what will the church become?

[ 38 : 08 ] And, you know, I'm getting down to, you know, each individual congregation is the dead church. And I was listening to John MacArthur last week and he was talking about when the pandemic hit two weeks that he just preached to his wife, Patricia.

And, but after that, he said people started coming. You know, he didn't get called out to come, but they just started coming. And he said they were getting members from other churches because they either shut down or just, or just, you know, just going online stuff and they just wanted to fellowship. And I'm kind of thinking that, you know, I'm hoping maybe that this will happen to our church. So, I don't, I don't like getting members from other churches, but if they're not preaching the gospel, if they're not getting fed, you know, this is where, you know, they need to be because I know you'll continue to preach the gospel.

And just, you know, I looked up, there was a church, I don't know if I would name the church, it's a city church, you know, it's a big church, you know. And I just looked up his website to wondering what they actually believe about the Bible and there was nothing about the doctrines.

There was nothing about sound doctrine. I don't remember what exactly that they said, but, you know, but it was nothing about biblical truth. So, anyway, that's what I wanted to say.

[ 39 : 30 ] Yeah, good. Good comments. I think, in thinking about this last part too, if the church we have been, if the truth we have been assigned to proclaim has forgotten, what will the church become?

And thinking too, of what if we forget to proclaim the truth to one another in difficult situations as well? Like I'm talking about like church discipline matters and things like that.

If we're not proclaiming the truth to each other in those situations, then what have we become? Like a farce, you know. Preaching hypocrites.

we're saying one thing and not following through with the truth. And so I think even in those situations, we need to be mindful that the Lord is watching and aware.

Let's move on to the next question. What other messages are Christians tempted to proclaim other than the gospel today? And we've kind of answered this already with some of the things that we've seen churches replace the gospel with, but do you have anything else to add here?

[ 40 : 40 ] What other messages are? And so we're noticing what a lot of these pastors are preaching. This talks more about the Christians, what they're tempted to, what messages they're tempted to want to hear.

What are the messages that people are tempted by? Want to hear? That sounds good to me. The messages that tickle the ears. Wes?

Five steps to a better marriage. Yeah. Seven ways to help your children obey. You know, nine steps to do whatever. It's like, not necessarily self-help, but you might as well just go to a secular seminar to get some of that information.

You know, I think of Joel Olsteen. He should just say, I'm a motivational speaker and just go on tour and not stop pretending he's a pastor. And then prosperity gospel and the healings will start at 9 p.m. sharp, so be here, so we're going to start healing people.

Don't even count in the Holy Spirit if he's going to move or whatever. They just, it's going to happen like we said it is with Benny Hinn and those kind of guys. Yeah. Good. So, self-improvement messages.

[ 41 : 55 ] You know, do these steps and this is what the result will be. We like to, we like to work, we like to earn things and so, you know, we want to feel like there is a better life that we can earn, but, you know, obviously salvation is not something we can earn, but we like those kinds of messages.

I mean, we can talk about the other way, but there's also, legalism is appealing as well to us and we've got to be careful with that too. Josiah and then Kayla. Also like pep talk, preaching, like you can do it, you can get past your sin if you, if you believe in yourself.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, like a pep talk. Yeah, you can do it. Suck it up. You can be better.

You're the solution to your own problems. And we see that too in a lot of, you know, turn on the TV, especially I think, yeah, yeah. And I think it's even, that's a popular method with younger false pastors today is the pep talk method.

You know, they've got the big muscles and they look like, yeah, like a coach in the weight room, you know? So, anyhow. And that's when you guys were to say, well, your muscles are big too, Pastor Mike, so.

[ 43 : 23 ] That's what you're thinking, right? Yeah, yeah. Well, kind of along those same lines, I think something that may hit closer to home for some of us is, well, I'll just use my family as an example.

I have a sister-in-law who is going to church, not that side of the family, a sister-in-law that's been going to church regularly, and at first, when she was very opposed to going to church, it was really easy to say, you know, we're all human, we all sin, like making some sort of an excuse for why we're not perfect Christians, and trying to not sugarcoat the gospel, but trying to, oh, I guess sugarcoat the gospel, because you're trying not to make it sound so harsh for somebody who already had such a negative outlook on Christianity, and one night, I'll never forget, we were at our house sitting in the living room, and we were talking about, she had told my brother, well, if my daughter wants to be gay, I will support her, and my brother's like, no, she will not be, and that's the first time that I was able to really, like, stand up for what the gospel says and what the Bible teaches about a man and a woman and marriage, and

I'm glad that I was able to stand my ground then, because as time has gone on and they've gone to church, she, the wheels are turning, and she told my brother, just within the last month, she's like, I get what all the hype is about, and I want to learn more, and that's something that I didn't think we'd hear her ever say or say for a very, very long time, so, listen to when God is trying to nudge you in that direction.

Yeah. It's hard, but it's worth it. Good. Yeah, so we see the cheap grace, God accepts you as you are, repentance isn't mentioned, sin is hardly talked about, or if it's, or they'll use a different word for it, like brokenness or something else.

Yeah, create your own truth. That's a message that's popular with people, because, you know, because it doesn't say anything about wrath or judgment or hell, and those are topics that are obviously uncomfortable for them to hear about.

[ 46 : 00 ] That's great, though, that, you know, and a great example, too, of, in a situation like that, speaking the truth in a loving way, and though it was hard to hear, you know, through time, you've seen that, you know, what you had to say and what the Lord put on your heart to say has had an impact.

Shirley? Also, the coexist thing. Oh, yeah, all roads lead to heaven. That just kills me when I see that. Aha! Yes! There's many ways to get to heaven.

No. Ah! Yeah, the coexist bumper stickers really bother me. Every time I see them, I just want to pull it off.

I say pick a side. Well, because the people who put them on there, they, this is what I think, they're putting, they put themselves up here like, oh, you know, I'm beyond all these differences.

I'm more enlightened than you all. And they don't know the differences between the different religions that are part of that coexist thing. And so, it's just very, it reeks to me of self-righteousness and a lot of ignorance.

[ 47 : 18 ] Any other answers to this question whether their messages are Christians tempted to proclaim other than the gospel today? I think we talked about the word of faith movement, right? The power resides within you.

You can be a God with a lowercase g and within you is the ability to control the weather. You guys seen the Kenneth Copeland, it was his wife who talked about him rebuking a storm in the plane. We watched that at men's night. And, it's wild, you know, and all these people, lots of people are listening to it and believing it that Kenneth Copeland had the power to rebuke a storm in a plane, you know?

And then, if you've seen also that Kenneth has also rebuked COVID-19 and he did that a while ago but apparently his power has limitations because, but you know, that's an appealing message to people, right?

Like, ooh, I have more power than this untapped power exists within me that, you know, I could be like some kind of Superman or Superwoman and, and, and be more in touch with the universe and,

and bend God to my will.

[ 48 : 43 ] Somebody else have the microphone? Now we want to get you on the microphone, Linda. Hold on. Well, Lee will get us, Lee will, I'll be in trouble with Lee.

about Kenneth Copeland, I have a friend that went and started, left the Baptist Church to go to the Kenneth Copeland so that she could be filled with the Holy Spirit. So not only can he rebuke the storms, he can fill you with the Holy Spirit too.

So, just let you know. Yeah. Okay. Tragic. Doylene?

Doylene? Good job. Good job. One thing I don't think we've touched on tonight that we're talking about proclaiming the truth and proclaiming the gospel seems like more and more and more just the validity of do we really have the word of God in this book.

Used to be, everybody saw it as a book that was infallible. But everywhere you go now, you can read a scripture to someone. They say, well, yeah, but that book, you can't believe in that book anymore.

[ 49 : 59 ] And I wasn't raised to learn how to defend how the book is still the book. And we're starting to read seeking Allah, finding Jesus in our ladies' book club this semester or this season.

And that's one thing I didn't understand about Islam, how they see Christians as being corrupted because they're taught that the Koran has to stay in their original language and has never been corrected, translated, you know, paraphrased, anything.

So that's the only one thing you can trust that this has been translated in so many different versions and translations. You can't trust this anymore. I watch, and I think I'm going to have to quit watching, but I watch the History Channel from time to time and some of the, it'll be a rabbi or somebody who's a professor at a college that teaches Christianity and they're quoting scripture and they're saying it like, you know, oh well, but you've got, you know, you can't really trust that way it was written now.

You know, so we've got to almost need to take a step back and learn why do we still think this is the word of God and start standing on that because our generation and our culture is being told to question it where I don't think a hundred years ago anybody would question it.

Yeah. So we need to get back to the basics of why do we still believe this is the word of God. Yeah, that's a great point and there's a lot of great material out there if Christians would pick it up talking about, you know, the manuscripts and how many we have and how we've gotten what we've got today and it does the opposite.

[ 51 : 50 ] You realize, wow, this really is, has survived. It really is the word of God. There was a, he's an apologist. He, I think, is an adjunct at Oklahoma Wesleyan.

Cameron, do you know who I'm talking about? He's Indian and I can see his face but I can't think of his name and he was, he was Muslim.

Can't think of his name. He's written some books. He's pretty well known but he, he had, pastors from our association came down to Oklahoma Wesleyan and he spoke to us. Yeah.

Abdu Murray? Yeah. And, and he was talking about being a Muslim. I think he's from Michigan. I think he went to the University of Michigan or maybe but Christians would try to share the gospel with him and what he found and he said is that he knew the Bible better than those Christians did. And in fact, that's what, that's why, that's what led him to the word is that he wanted to win those arguments and so he would look to scripture to be able to find his points of argument and God saved him by reading the Bible but that really stood out to me because he was talking about the fact that so many Christians, again, speaking about biblical illiteracy, here was a Muslim who's saying, I know their scriptures better than they do.

[ 53 : 15 ] So, that's tragic too. Mike? In Sunday school this morning, we were in the book of Acts and I think one thing that dawned on me particularly when you were preaching and the questions came up is they look at what happened in the book of Acts chapter four after 3,000 were saved at the day of Pentecost, then the second sermon, there were over 5,000 that were added that day and it talks about how they preached with great power and then an earthquake, you know, the shaking of the building and all those I think in my mind many of these big evangelists say, if I can recreate what happened there, they're going to flock to me just like that and, you know, like I say on men's night we saw the thing where they turned the air conditioner on and the cool breath of God was coming down and they put gliver in it and shekinah glory was falling down and I wouldn't be surprised but they didn't shake the building and say, this is a sign and so they're going real big on signs.

Yeah, that's true. Seeing a lot more of that as well. So things to be on guard against and of course the more you're in the word, the more you know the word, the more you spot the difference between the truth and error.

I think the more you're in the word the more you have a desire to proclaim the word as well and so I just encourage you to spend time with God and his word this week and so the last question this is one we'll end on in prayer.

Who specifically is God calling you to proclaim the gospel to? And so I'm just going to give you a little bit of time, not much time, maybe 30 seconds.

okay? And just think as you pray about that person that the Lord has put in your life at this time.

[ 55 : 23 ] Maybe they've been a part of your life for a long time but this is the one whom he specifically wants you to proclaim the gospel to and then after that time I'm going to pray and again encourage you to pray with me but also pray more importantly that God would and just press it on your heart to proclaim that truth to them.

So let's do that now. Lord we thank you that you are the God of all truth that you've given us your word which contains all your promises the revelation of who you are the revelation of who Christ is the gospel that has saved us.

We're thankful Lord to live in a nation even though we're heartbroken by a lot of what we see happening these days that we still have this freedom to meet here and to have your word.

We still have the freedom to proclaim the gospel and so Lord we pray that we would take more opportunities of those freedoms that we have to do that very thing right now knowing that we're living in a society that has been given over to a debased mind that has exchanged the truth for a lie and knowing Lord that you've called us to this time and to this moment to be your people who serve as a pillar and buttress of your truth and so Lord we pray that that's what we would be that we would share the truth that we would speak it in love that we would speak it with a desire not to win a conversation or an argument but to make disciples to see you save people as a result of your using us to communicate this truth Lord we pray and pray for those whom specifically God right now you have placed in our lives Lord who who we need to be proclaiming the gospel to

God I pray that you would have us in your word that we wouldn't lose it that we wouldn't allow our bibles to go unopened and I pray God that the more we are in your word the more you will increase our desire to proclaim it and to safeguard it and to teach it and to preach it and obey it so Lord for us we pray that we would take seriously your call as your church to go and to make disciples and we pray Lord that your spirit would spurn us to action and that the results would please you would glorify you and they'd be a testimony to the world that Jesus Christ is the way he is the truth and he is the life Lord be with us as we depart from here and as we continue as your church and the different places that you have us

[ 58 : 31 ] Lord that our light would shine and that we'd make much of the name of Jesus Christ in whose name we pray amen all right god bless you all have a great week Thank you.