Series: Legacy

Series Text: 1st Timothy

August 25, 2019

Message 4:

**Live Free or Die**

1st Timothy 3:16-4:16

**Intro:** It was March of 1775. The Declaration of Independence had not yet been declared or signed, but delegates were meeting in Virginia for the purpose of raising a militia to defend Virginia against what they saw as overbearing incursions by the British - they were beginning to no longer view themselves as British subjects - they were longing for freedom.

The Second Virginia Convention met March 20, 1775 at Richmond in what is now called St. John’s Church -

Some were urging caution and patience - they wanted to give the King time to response to their most recent petitions.

Patrick Henry proposed organizing volunteers in every Virginia county. There was no manuscript of his speech, but years later, upon the recollections of men like Thomas Jefferson, the speech was recalled -

The speech was given in the face of arguments that those living in the American colonies would be no match for the British military - the largest and most powerful in the world at the time -

His speech was filled with Biblical references - I want to share part of what he said with you - and I see a parallel in his desire for American freedom with the desire we need to have for true spiritual freedom -

“For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery… If we wish to be free … we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

 “They tell us … that we are weak … But when shall we be stronger? … we are not weak if we make a proper use of the means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides … we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave…

 “Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

 *history.org*

He wanted freedom. Today we have great freedom in our nation - but are we living in spiritual freedom?

Another well-known phrase is “Live Free or Die” - it is the motto of the State of New Hampshire, and while it didn’t originate with the Founding Fathers, it became a powerful sentiment.

These convictions are true in our spiritual lives - we will either have freedom - or we will have death and destruction.

John 8:32 - And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 8:36 - So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

Paul writes to Timothy -

**Big Idea: Give away the Good News for free!**

**T.S.:** We have a freedom that goes beyond what Patrick Henry fought for! We are called to freely give others the opportunity to receive this great freedom - If you are not experiencing true freedom today, we want this for you!

In this next section of Paul’s letter … 5 actions we need to take to give away this great news!

**> Grasp the Greatness**

1st Timothy 3:16 - Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith:

 Christ was revealed in a human body

 and vindicated by the Spirit.

 He was seen by angels

 and announced to the nations.

 He was believed in throughout the world

 and taken to heaven in glory.

Matthew 13:11 - He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not.”

Only the Holy Spirit can open one’s eyes to receive and understand the mystery of God becoming flesh - in His humanity and in His Divinity, freely giving His life as the perfect, sinless sacrifice - the only way our sins can be forgiven - the only way we can get in a right relationship with God.

We receive this truth by faith - we receive it freely - then our minds are opened to understand the mystery.

This is a benefit from this faith relationship with Jesus - direct teaching from the Holy Spirit! He enlightens us to understand the Word of God!

Mark 4:11 - He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secret of the Kingdom of God…”

Ephesians 1:9 - God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan.

Ephesians 3:4 - As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ.

Ephesians 6:19 - And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Holy Spirit gives the believer understanding - we must pray that He helps us - gives us the words - to speak to others in such a way so that they can receive this freedom.

He helped Patrick Henry! Patrick Henry had convincing words - and part of those words was a realization that the venture would be impossible without God.

Somehow, some way - he had the words to convince others to fight for their freedom.

The truth cannot be understood apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit - We need to grasp the greatness of this gift of freedom from sin - and ask God for the words to share this with others -

Because if we don’t live in freedom from sin - we die - eternally.

Grasp the greatness of this -

The Apostle’s Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,

 the Maker of heaven and earth,

 and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,

 born of the virgin Mary,

 suffered under Pontius Pilate,

 was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell.

The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,

 and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

 from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;

 [in one holy] church;

 the communion of saints;

 the forgiveness of sins;

 the resurrection of the body;

 and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Nicene Creed - 325 A.D.

 We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

 And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

That is the truth - it’s free - and believing INTO this truth wholeheartedly gives ultimate freedom!

**> Ditch the Deception**

1st Timothy 4:1-5 - Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead.

 They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth. Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer.

What Paul is talking about here is legalism -

I believe I can safely say - without cursing - this is “damn legalism” -

Legalism will damn you -

There are a couple of lists - scrips - if you do these things you will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

When we add to God’s list - we become legalists - and we become purveyors of death not life - we give away slavery not freedom.

Legalism simply trades one kind of slavery and unhappiness for another.

“I’m a recovering legalist” -

Many churches become legalistic - every person has to fight legalism - If we don’t see that - recognize that - acknowledge that - then it is a huge log in our eye - and we don’t see it when we are pointing out the specks of dust in other people’s eyes and lifestyles.

The opposite of legalism is also very dangerous - is licentiousness - a license to do anything and everything - It sounds like freedom, but it’s not - it’s just slavery by a prettier name.

Last week - 18 characteristics to strive for that will help us be a better influence - did you identify the top three you needed to work on?

Not a legalistic list - but guidance advice - from an experienced minister to a younger minister -

We should help one another - pour our life experience into others.

Those who are gaining ground in life, should look for others to pour their life, wisdom, scriptural study and influence into -

Those who are newer on this journey should seek to receive from others.

*EMPHASIZE GROWING YOUNG CONFERENCE*

But if all we are going to do is pass on legalistic lists - we won’t influence anyone - the only difference we make will be crippling!

The true faith - is grace - don’t be deceived by legalism -

Ephesians 2:8-9 - God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

**> Give this away**

1st Timothy 4:6-10 - If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, Timothy, you will be a worthy (word study - excellent) - servant of Christ Jesus, one who is nourished by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed. Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives’ tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. “Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.” This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it. This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers.

This is not the first nor the only time that Paul warns against wasting time arguing about stuff.

We love that - but it is a distraction. Tell others the truth - tell it in a winsome way -

A great salesman doesn’t argue people into buying - He makes the product so attractive they can’t help but desire it.

That shouldn’t be hard to do with the gift of eternal life! You can’t beat the goodness of this story!

We were messed up … messed up beyond messed up - none of us had any hope at all -

No way we could be holy before a holy God -

Jesus came - took our place … It’s free!

Paul says, “This is why we work hard - we struggle for this - we want others to know this hope and freedom!”

Sometimes it is a struggle - but we fight to stay on this course - nothing is more important than bringing people into this life-giving relationship!

Gloria Gaither wrote that Bill Gaither’s grandfather used to say, “There are basically two kinds of people in this world – givers and takers – so decide which one you want to be.”

She went on to write about how - “Today we live in a world suffering from almost an epidemic of depression.  We’re taught to guard our own turf, be independent, and to not get too involved with the people next door…

“An old friend of ours told us early in our marriage, “You’ll only be able to keep what you give away.”

“… one of the most important principles Jesus taught was, “Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat.  But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over.  In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life.  But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you’ll have it forever, real and eternal.”  (John 12:24-26 The Message)

“[Jesus] was about to become the living, walking proof of what He said.  Without the cross, without the tomb, without throwing His life willingly away, there would have been no resurrection… He invites us to … be willing to deliver the seed of God to the world at any cost to our personal security, He calls us to be redemptive as well by saving back nothing, throwing ourselves away, so that a whole crop of new life, peace, patience, forgiveness and love can grow out of the seed of what we give away.

“In the meantime, we find such joy in the process – and freedom.”

And then she wrote a song - Give It Away

*If you want more happy than your heart can hold;*

*If you wanna stand taller, if the truth were told,*

*Take whatever you have and give it away!*

*If you want less lonely and a lot more fun*

*And deep satisfaction when the day is done,*

*Throw your heart wide open and give it away!*

**> No age discrimination**

1st Timothy 4:11-13 - Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them.

We in the church are not exempt from looking at younger people and thinking they are not qualified to do certain things around the church or in ministry -

* I started serving in Children’s Church when I was 9
	+ Playing piano and doing ventriloquism!
* Leading worship and preaching at age 15
* Started pastoring at age 20
* Started my second church at age 27
* I came here at age 40 and still had people saying, “Aren’t you a little young to be a Lead Pastor?” - I guess I looked better then than I do now!

In the words of Harrison Ford in Raiders of the Lost Ark - “It’s not the years - it’s the mileage!”

Growing Young study - Unlocking Keychain leadership -

*“If you are willing to entrust your keys to young people, they will trust you with their hearts, their energy, their creativity, and even their friends. Yes, it can sometimes seem like more work than it’s worth—but if you give them your access, you have the opportunity to touch a whole generation.”*

The study also revealed a desire among the younger ones in the church family to have relationship with people from the generation ahead of them - so that they could learn from them!

Let’s not be guilty of what Timothy was allowing - let’s not look down on some just because of their age - let’s not think we have to hold tightly on to everything - let’s be willing to pass leadership on and trust ministries to others coming up behind us.

Come October 11-12 to hear more about this -

**> Discover & use your gift!**

1st Timothy 4:14-16 - Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.

Next Steps - Discover your personality - discover your gift - Find your Design - and step into the place of ministry God designed just for you.

No age discrimination - Everyone has gifts from God - don’t neglect your gift - don’t let it sit on the shelf - do what you have to do to be a part of what God is doing!

**Concl:** Paul’s 5 action steps that will help us give away this Good News for free:

* Grasp the Greatness
* Ditch the Deception
* Give this away
* No age discrimination
* Discover and use your gift

**Invitation -**

**Blessing -**