

A Warning Not to Stray From the Gospel

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer warns against straying from the gospel, emphasizing the dangers of legalism and the importance of maintaining truth in the church.

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, John 13:35, 1 Timothy 4:1

Topics: "Last Days"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on a recent experience where people from different backgrounds came together to help someone move in the rain. He emphasizes that this act of love and service is a demonstration of the gospel at work. The preacher then shares about an encounter with a religious person who questioned his dietary choices, leading him to discuss the importance of understanding the Christian life. He references 1 Timothy 4:1 and explains that in the latter times, some will fall away from the faith due to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. He also addresses the issue of forbidding marriage and abstaining from certain foods, highlighting the importance of knowing the truth and not being led astray.

Transcript

Please open your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 4, verse 1. You'll have to excuse me, I think I caught something of a cold yesterday when we were moving in all the rain. So usually before I preach, I go to a respected counselor and ask his advice. I went to Raya this morning.

We were talking about the sermon. I said, well, what should I preach on? He said, well, I like Moses. Okay.

I said, should I preach short or long? He said, long. You always need to know which counselor to choose. And I chose a good one.

But we're not going to talk about Moses. We're going to talk about a passage that is very, very important to our understanding of the Christian life. We'll start off in verse 1, but the spirit explicitly says that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

Now, let's look at the first phrase. But the spirit explicitly says this is very unusual language. We don't find this in any other place in the New Testament.

So great emphasis is being given, which means this is very, very important, which means you should listen. I mean, you should listen to all the words of God and all the words of Christ, but every once in a while reading through the New Testament, we hear Jesus say, verily, verily, truly, truly, I say unto you, it

doesn't mean that it's more true. It's just that he's putting emphasis on this.

Listen, if you're going to listen, this is what you need to listen to. So this is the way Paul is dealing with this. But the spirit explicitly says that something's going to happen in the latter times.

Now, we need to define latter times because there's a lot of confusion about that. Some people look back to 1948 and the reestablishment of the nation of Israel as later times. Other people of a more charismatic persuasion look back to certain revivals to say the latter days have now begun.

Well, all of that is wrong. According to the Scriptures, the latter days, the latter times began 2000 years ago. This is very, very clear from Peter quoting Joel in Acts chapter two, when the spirit of God is poured out.

And Peter said in the latter days, quoting Joel, the latter days began with the first coming of the Messiah, his death, resurrection and ascension. These are the days of the Messiah. These are the latter days, which I don't have time to get into it, but it's also time of trouble.

It was always believed that when the Messiah came, there would first be a time of trouble, a time of transition, a time of already and not yet, which is what we can see today in a macrocosm. We can see God's kingdom advancing in the world, but it hasn't fully advanced. And we can also see it in a microcosm.

We can see it in you. There is a time of trouble in that Messiah has come into your heart. He has made great changes, but it is still within a time of trouble in your own soul.

You're not completely sanctified. It's what we call in theology the already and the not yet. The kingdom has come.

The kingdom is coming. The we've been in the latter days. So Paul is going to describe something that is going to be a battle within the entire age of the church.

It's something that he had to write about here when he was writing to Timothy. It's something that you and I need to hear 2,000 years later. Now he says, but in but the spirit explicitly says that in latter times some will fall away from the faith.

Now, this is very important. You say, well, yeah, we live in that time. Now, we live in a time in the West where there are not many believers, but people who out and out say they are atheists, they are agnostic, they are of some other religion, but they are not Christian.

This is talking about something that's going to go on within the context of what is known as the public or open church. It's saying that within Christianity itself, there are going to be people who fall away. Now we know that in falling away, they prove that they never truly were Christian.

But what it's saying is that within the public church and what I mean, public church, I mean, of all the people who confess themselves to be Christians, there will be people who will maintain that they are Christian. And yet in reality, they fall away from what it really means to be a Christian. And can't you see that's the most dangerous type of all? I mean, a man who walks into the church and says, I am an atheist or a man who walks into the church and says, I am a worshiper of Satan.

Automatically, everyone's antennas go up and we go, we're not listening to this guy. But if someone walks in and they say, I am thoroughly Christian. But I've got a new or a better or a more biblical way of looking

at things than you do.

That's dangerous. You see, that can be very, very dangerous now. He says, but the spirit explicitly says that in the latter times, some will fall away from the faith.

Now, what will they do? These who maintain their Christian confession to some degree, and yet they've fallen away from the faith. What do they look like? He says they're paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. Now.

Again, even for me, I study the Bible, this is really hard language. Do you see this? He's not talking about people who just kind of fall into an error or make some sort of doctrinal mistake. He is talking about something grave, severe, dangerous.

Now, let's let's let's just go back and summarize. Remember what I said? He says the spirit explicitly says that's very unique language. He's saying this is important.

Listen, and then he comes back and goes, these errors of these people who confess themselves to be Christians is nothing more than the doctrines of the devil himself. Now, he goes on to describe these people, verse two says, by means of the hypocrisy of liars. And then he says, seared in their own conscience, as with a branding iron.

Now, when a conscience is seared, it means that, well, for example. When we used to dehorn cattle on our ranch. At times, there was a time where you sawed off horns and then as we got more modern, we would take this hot searing iron that was about this big around, had a hole in the middle of it.

You place it over the horn and at first it was horrible pain. I mean, you'd have to wrestle that animal. If you didn't have his head in a head catcher, you had a war on your hands.

But then as that went in there, it seemed like the pain almost stopped. What happened? The nerves were seared. There was no longer any feeling.

And so we're talking about individuals who in one sense have no sense whatsoever of their sin. Not only are they blind to it, they don't they don't feel it. They don't sense it.

They're not a confessional people, a people who are constantly seeing greater manifestations of the glories of God and greater manifestations of their own sin and living a life of confession. No, they are fine. They are fine.

Now, it's also hypocrisy, because whenever you do, whenever you enter in to what we would call the Christian religion and yet you no longer see your sin as any big deal, we're talking about self-righteousness. And when we're talking about self-righteousness, we're talking about hypocrisy. My family and I have been studying the Pharisees in the last few days, and the one thing that is amazing about the Pharisees is how blind that they truly were.

They were like to themselves. They thought of themselves as a beautiful mowed field of green grass. And Jesus said, and people walk on top of that green grass and they think it's a beautiful field.

You have fooled everyone, but underneath your dead bones, that's the type of person that we're talking about here, someone who is self-righteous, self-satisfied. OK, so so up until this point, we've described a person who's got some severe problems. Now, he's going to go on and further explain what these people

teach.

Says verse three, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. All right, I wasn't expecting that at all. Were you? I mean, he's talked about the spirit explicitly says.

Then he talks of warning us of doctrines of demons, satanic teaching, and then he talks about individuals whose conscience are just totally seared with a hot branding iron. And then all of a sudden he starts talking about food. I mean, I thought he would introduce some doctrine of the Antichrist, the denying of the deity of Christ teaching whatever.

I don't expect him now to just start talking about, listen, all food is good, marriage is good and things like that. Do you see how it just doesn't seem to fit? Now, when we look at this text, it's men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods. And you think to yourself, well, Brother Paul, why did you choose this text? I mean, we have no one in our church who is advocating that we shouldn't get married or that we should abstain from certain foods.

If there is one problem that at least this church does not have is an unwillingness to get married, have children and eat. So what does this have to do with us? You're going to see in a moment, hopefully even in a way that will bring fear to your own heart, that in many ways this is talking about all of us and a tendency that is found in all of us. And it's make no mistake about it, it's deadly.

Remember what I said, a Satanist walks in and says he's a Satanist, we're not going to listen. But something that's 90 percent Christian or 100 percent Christian, just with the wrong emphasis, it can turn a gospel believing church into nothing more than a bunch of self-righteous people full of legalism. And so let's now go back and look at the fuller context of this text and then we'll understand it.

And to do that, we've got to come out of chapter four and we've got to reverse our engines and go into chapter three and look at verse 16. Well, let's go back to verse 15 of chapter three of First Timothy. But in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God.

What are the priorities in the household of God? What should the household of God be doing? How should it act? But not just act, act is always based on how do you think, what do you believe the household of God? Now, look at this, which is the church of the living God and the pillar and support of the truth. As individuals, we have a holy deposit given to us, and that is the truth of God. But as a collective people, we also have a holy deposit given to us, and that's the truth of God.

As individuals, you and I have the responsibility to maintain the truth, we have learned to learn more and to share with others and collectively as a church, when we come together and the world can see us together, we have the responsibility to guard the truth. It is our responsibility and it is a tremendous one and market, you'll be held accountable on the day of judgment. You're not concerned for truth.

You're not concerned for maintaining it, teaching it. You will be held accountable as a believer on the day of judgment. For the truth that's been given to you, the truth that you've maintained now, he goes on and he says this by common confession, great is the mystery of godliness by common confession.

He says it I don't even need to say this, but I'm going to say it. That's what he's saying. He said it is commonly known if there is a truth which everyone in Christianity knows and is in agreement with, it is this great is the mystery of godliness.

How, how can a wretched, radically depraved. Sinner, God hating, sin loving, become a man or a woman who is godly. Full of piety, full of Christian virtue, I mean, if anyone would ask that question, you probably heard me say this before, but it is a greater demonstration of God's power when he converts a man than it is when he created the universe.

He created the universe ex nihilo, out of nothing. But when he recreates a man, he does it out of a massive, radical depravity. I remember my years in Peru.

There was a family, I won't mention their name, but they were both lawyers. And the husband was a scoundrel of scoundrels. He was a scoundrel among lawyers.

He was a scoundrel. And he was converted. And he became one of the finest men I have ever known.

One of the finest. How does that happen? That's a mystery. And see, one of the reasons why it's so important that you understand the doctrine of depravity is so that you can revel in that mystery.

If you think that men are just pretty much good and God just kind of, you know, does a little bit, touches them a little and brings them into his family, then you can't appreciate the gospel. But when you realize that Hitler is what you would have been if God had not restrained your evil, then when you see yourself with new virtue, loving God and loving people, you go great is the mystery of godliness. It's a mystery that science hasn't been able to figure out.

I mean, we can land a man on the moon, but we can't make a safe neighborhood. God can. God can.

Because he can change the people who are in that neighborhood. Great is the mystery of godliness. And what is that mystery? We see it before us here in verse 16.

It is the gospel. It is really a person, the mystery of godliness, he Christ, the son of God, who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the spirit. What does that mean? That when he was raised from the dead, it was God's vindication of his son.

If you have any doubt whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was the son of God, God answered that question, he raised him from the dead. And if that's not enough vindication for you, if that's not enough evidence, then I've got some bad news instead of good news. No other evidence will be given to you.

He raised him from the dead and he vindicated him, he was seen by angels, he was proclaimed among the nations. One of the things that's so important to understand about Christianity is it wasn't done in the corner, in a corner somewhere. It isn't some hidden or nationalistic religion.

It's been proclaimed among the nations and people from every tribe and nation and language. Most have already come into the fold and others will before he comes back. You see, when you look at Christianity from the perspective of the West or the United States, you might say, wow, small minority.

Small minority, you go to Indonesia, you look at the amount of Christians and you might say small minority. But. If you take.

All the Christians from every country of the world and you bring them all together, you see this is the biggest thing going. So he was vindicated in spirit, he was seen by angels. He was proclaimed among the nations.

He was believed on in the world. He was taken up into glory. He has outlined for us the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, what is the great mystery, the revealed mystery now? What is the great truth? The only truth that can make a man godly, that can make a man pleasing to God, that can give a man true piety. What is the only thing that can do that? The gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of Jesus Christ not only saves us, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the primary means of sanctifying us, of changing our lives, of making us imitators of God in Christ. It is this message of the gospel.

It is understanding the gospel and in that understanding of the gospel being changed by it in the greatest manifestation of that change being faith towards God and love towards the saints. And it's the only message you see. Here's one of the great problems in the church today.

We thoroughly believe Romans chapter one, verse 16. We say the gospel is the only message, the only power through which a man can be saved. I wish we would carry that on to sanctification.

But then when we get to sanctification, we've got all sorts of ideas of how to make someone holy. Put all kinds of rules on them to make them holy. No, the same message that saves.

Is the message that sanctifies. Now, in this context, we can understand verse three, men who forbid marriage advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. What is he talking about? Well, let me give you an exaggerated.

Illustration, and then I'm going to bring it home with some other illustrations that should touch your life and either make you tremble or make you angry. I was I was in Peru years ago and I was sitting down in the building that we had as our church. It was it was an old house is what it was.

And wars going on, people are dying, all sorts of things. And I had spent the last couple of hours just pleading with a person with regard to the gospel. Their lives were just completely and totally messed up.

Drug addiction, everything you could imagine in every kind of bondage imaginable. And I'm preaching the gospel, preaching the gospel, preaching the gospel. Finally, I'm wore entirely out.

The person leaves, I sit down out there in the middle of the one big room we called an auditorium. I'm sitting there in a chair, broken, poured out, tired, and the doorbell rings. I go over, I open the door and there's obviously a religious person there who wants to tell me something.

And so I open the door and I say, yes, can I help you? And the person said, I have one question for you. I said, OK, what is it? Do you eat meat? I said, what? Do you eat meat? Yes. Why? He started opening up the scriptures and explaining to me that I did not know the true way to be pleasing to God or piety or anything else.

He had every kind of rule and regulation about food and this and that and everything. And you know, it's amazing. And here's the bad part about it.

A lot of what he said was true about food. I needed to eat better, but it won't make me holy. There is a message, just one message that will make me holy, that is understanding what God has done for me in Christ and understanding all the teaching of Christ in the context of that gospel that he has given me.

And if I stray from that to any other thing, giving emphasis to any other thing. Listen to what Paul, the apostle, is telling me. I'm starting to depart from the faith and I'm getting involved in doctrines of demons.

Now, let's talk about a few things and bring this home now. Now, let's bring this home as we go through stages of our lives and stages of our spiritual walk. God does certain things at certain times.

OK, we have to be very, very careful that the emphasis of that moment does not become the emphasis of our Christianity. Christianity is all about marriage. No, it's not.

It's all about family. No, it's not. It's all about morality.

No, it's not. It's all about decency and modesty and this and that and every sort of thing. No, it is not.

It is far too big to be brought under one of these simple categories. Even the statement that Dr. Piper has often made, I respect Dr. Piper. I agree with him in what I am about to say totally and completely.

It has been the greatest blessing of the church when he says it's all about the glory of God. But even that's not big enough. Christianity is so much bigger than any one thing that we might try to emphasize.

Now, let me change course here and hit it from another direction. Your Christianity, when someone looked at it, what would be the emphasis? Now, let me give you let's let's talk about some practical illustrations here. I'm a homeschooler.

I teach people about homeschooling. I believe that homeschooling is very, very correct, very, very proper, very good thing to do. All right.

I had a pastor call me years ago and he goes, Brother Paul, I want you to come out and preach to my church. I said, well, why? He said, I'm afraid that there are many people here in this church that are lost. I said, why? Why do you feel that way? He said, because they're homeschoolers.

I said, brother, you homeschool. He goes, yes, but homeschooling is not my banner. He goes, I got people in this church that if I asked them to stand up and give their testimony, I think they would say something like this.

Five years ago, I discovered homeschooling. Homeschooling is not Christianity. It is not the badge of you being godly, it is not the great means in order to raise great children.

It is the gospel of Jesus Christ morality. Let's look at that for a moment. We want to teach our children manners and we want to teach them how to walk and how to talk.

We want to teach them how to think. We want to teach them proper logic. All these different things.

We want them to know how to say yes, sir, no, sir, stand up straight, shake men's hand, look people in the eye, act like a lady, dress like a lady, all these different things. But if that's the emphasis of your Christianity, you're teaching doctrines of demons. All those things ought to be taught.

They ought to be taught, but they are a small thing. What must be taught is, look, wife, look, children, look, son, look, daughter at this great God and what he has done for you. All your piety, all your loyalty, all your Christianity must come forth from this one thing.

He shed his own blood for your soul. My greatest, if I could say, and it's almost unbiblical to talk this way, but if I could transmit anything of myself to my wife, to my children. Any truth that is central in my life to you as a congregation, it would be the magnificence of the person of Jesus Christ, the unfathomable work that he has done for us and cause you all to pledge your hearts and loyalty to him.

And to love him and be mesmerized. By this thing. By this person, by Jesus Christ, now, all these things I've mentioned are so, yes, they're important, but the substance of Christianity is not ethics, it's not morality.

It is what? It is faith. In Christ, love for God and love for people that begins to. Change and transform your behavior, and since we do not have perfect minds, since we are not completely discerning with regard to the will of God, of course, we need all the scriptures and of course, we need principles and of course, we need Proverbs and of course, we need all the different truths of Scripture to help us.

The law is beneficial and all these things are wonderful aids. But the thing I want to transmit is the gospel. Why, Dad, are you faithful to our mother? Not because I want to be an ethical, upstanding man like the founders of this country.

I am faithful to their mother because Jesus Christ died for my sins. Dad, why do you spend time with us? It just provides an opportunity to say at one time your father was an extremely wicked man who would not be able to do any of the things he is doing right now in this family. But Jesus Christ, loyalty to him, that must be first in everything or we create a family full of Pharisees, a church full of Pharisees and a lot of people emphasizing and talking about things that just aren't that important.

Is it important to dress decently? Absolutely, absolutely. But from where should that come? We should have the wisdom of Scripture to guard us in this because we live in a culture that doesn't even know how to spell the word decency or modesty. But it flows from the fact of what? That Christ died for me.

Do we want young men to act like young men and young ladies to act like young ladies, and do we go to the scriptures in order to discover what that's like? Absolutely. But it's not about. That's primarily it's about Jesus Christ and his gospel, and that's what Paul is getting at here for all of us is let's not ever be distracted from what is the corpus, what is the main, what is the core, what is the foundation of our Christian life? I remember one time sitting down after I had preached at a conference, we went out to eat and with some very strict men, very strict theology, very strict behavior, all sorts of they were just they were strict.

And I remember this young guy comes walking up to us. He was our waiter and he had more bracelets on than my wife has ever even owned. He had blonde hair with flippy little things and all sorts of weird glasses on.

And I mean, he was I he was something. All right, he saw my Bible. And he walks up, you know, he's got our water and he walks up and he sees my Bible and he goes, dude, dude, you got a Bible.

I go, yeah, I do. He goes, cool. He goes, I got one of them.

I go, great. And I looked at the faces of those men, they were mad. They were just mad, they were probably thinking, yeah, I bet it's one of those liberal translations, something, you know, and I said, really? He goes, yeah, he goes, I was seeking and I was seeking and I was seeking and I was seeking for God and I found him.

And I saw those theologians just going, I could just see them, I could see their wheels are turning. You aren't seeking for God. No man seeks for God.

I go, really, you're seeking for him. Yeah, you found him. Yeah.

Good news. And he starts telling me all this stuff, kind of a little bit more than you'd want to know about his past life and everything else. And he walks away to get our meal.

And I look back at those men and I said, you know what? It's better to have it and not know what to call it than to know what to call it and not have it. God's done something in that young man's life. The most important thing that could be done, God has done in his life.

Yes, he's probably not had a father. Yes, he's so given over to so many things he doesn't even understand. But look, I don't want to be offensive, but I said, man, he's not living with his girlfriend anymore, is he? He's recognizing some things here.

What did that the gospel did it now? Let's come along and help this guy and try not to mess him up with all our little emphasis that are not emphasis. Let's try to help him, love him. Let's let's gospelize him, gospelize him, teach him more and more of the gospel.

Yes, we're going to talk to him about the law and talk about manhood. We're going to talk to him about family. We're going to talk to him, all those things, but those things.

Correctly lived out are only results of having understood the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that's what I want us to see in this church. We can all have different emphasis. That's part of being a body.

I come to the body with certain gifts, ways of looking at things, maybe a little bit different than you. You come other emphasis, but here's what I want us to see in this church, that it's the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that's the main thing, and that's the only thing that produces piety.

You know, when you talk about me and this is kind of off the subject, I guess a bit, but men, when you talk about. Your. Your family devotions are discipling your wife.

Or discipling your children, which if you love God is one of the main things you should be doing. I have preferred to use a term now that's been very helpful to keep me on track. You know, a lot of times when we start, we meet with our wives, family devotions are specifically with our children.

We may have a tendency to, you know, it's discipleship. It's it's teaching them this. It's teaching them that it's me preaching to them.

It's all these different things and all those are important. But I use this word. I seek to gospelize my wife.

I seek to gospelize my children. What do I mean by that? You see, teaching is pretty easy. That's why preaching is is much easier than true discipleship, one on one discipleship or discipleship with a group of guys, because when you're discipling, when you're gospelizing, it is through the teaching that you're giving.

But it is also through the life that you are living. I want with my children to communicate who is God, who is this magnificent Christ, what has he done for us on this cross? And then I want those things that flow from

that, like love and mercy and grace and compassion and all these things, I want that to flow out of my life into them. I want them to see that as the standard.

Listen to me, if you grab the gospel and take seriously the commands to love one another, you work the rest of it out. You work the rest of it out, you will work the rest of it out. And so even though I was going to teach on this chapter, as always, I did not get very far.

Here's what I want you to see, dear church. In yesterday. At Brother Allen's house, I saw this so clearly.

I saw old guys like Kevin and I saw young guys like Luke and others from the university. I saw girls out there from the university who are going to get in trouble because they got my boys all wet. Not really.

I saw all kinds of people who would normally not come together under any circumstance, come together to help somebody move all day in the rain. That's the gospel working. Even the Roman authorities who persecuted Christianity were absolutely astounded.

What were they astounded about? The love that these people have for one another. The way they serve one another just literally was astounding to them. They couldn't figure it out.

Why? It's a mystery. One of the things that I'm always talking about when we talk about church is that, you know how there was a fad, it's kind of going to one side now, like all fads do. The idea that we need to have a church wrapped around a certain type of people, like if we want to have a church among, you know, inner city people, we need to have an inner city church or we need to have kind of a yuppie suburb church or we need to have a cowboy church or we need to have a church for this type of person, that type of person.

Do you know that completely defeats the purpose of the church? Do you know that you couldn't say anything more unbiblical? Because the thing that just was the testimony to the lost world in the Roman Empire was this, hey, I thought Jews and Gentiles hated one another. And what's that Scythian doing in here? Well, how is it that all these people who normally would hate one another or despise one another or they live in different social classes or different categories, they're altogether more united than if they were with their own people? I mean, after all, I mean, that church in Radford, they have hour long prayer meetings at the beginning of the service. You're never going to get young people to church that way.

Yet a lot of young people here. Well, you know, the worship's kind of, you know, pretty traditional, stuff like that. Yeah, but.

We still have cool people coming, I suppose, somewhere, somebody here's at least somebody's got to be cool. You see the point that I'm trying to make, what I want you to do is I want you, I plead with you to look at the gospel, just the mere fact that he died for you. And let that be the catalyst to all your piety, let that be the thing that unites you, let that be the thing that draws you together, the thing that motivates you to to love.

And you really do know how to love. You really do. Now, the scriptures are going to refine that knowledge.

But if you're born again, you know how to love. So believe in Christ, grow in your knowledge of him and your appreciation of him and then love and realize that when someone comes into this congregation. And they're there, they're there, maybe they're not this and they're not that and everything else do not start coming to them talking about all these peripheral things.

Talk to them about the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere you go. Let's say it and I'll close with this. Let's say that I'm standing outside of a bar.

And there's there's people coming out, they're all let's say that there's just there's a few women over here and prostitutes. Now, I can go to them and I can teach them principles, I can tell them maybe how they should change the way their dress is, their hair, their makeup, I could counsel the others about the terrible things of drinking, I can point to them, I can point them to the golden age of our country when people were more civil, I could do all sorts of things and it's not going to have an ounce of power in it. I can gospelize them.

I can tell them there is a God and he loves you and he sent his son to die for you. You need to know him, you need to know that love, you need to be transformed by it. Yes, you need to repent, you need to change.

But here's the reason why. Look unto him, look what he did. Gospelizing people, gospelizing people.

If we do it any other way, we have fallen into doctrines of demons. I teach a lot in a lot of different places about homeschooling. I would hate for this to be known as a homeschooling church.

I teach about family. I would hate for this to be known as a family church. I teach about biblical manhood and teach about clothing.

I would hate this church to be known for those things. I would want this church to be known for the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's all we have.

It's all we have. It's all that saves us. Now, if you're here today, there are so many people who believe themselves to be Christians, but are you Christian? You can just have the tradition of it's a dangerous thing to be born in Virginia.

Where a lot of people go to church, it's very dangerous to be born into a family that takes seriously their Christianity because you think that somehow you've inherited that. Has your life been changed? Is it changing? I could say on one hand, have you experienced the freedom of Christ, a power over sin, a new power to love growing within you? But I could also say, on the other hand, have you experienced the captivity of Christ and that is that he has taken and is more and more taking over your life? I tell my children all the time that in one way I'm free, in another, I'm more of a captive than I've ever been in my life. It's the chains of Christ.

It's the love of Christ that constrains us. Listen, sometimes in my family, we'll laugh when we're around the table or something because somebody will do something really stupid. And a lot of times it's me, according to my wife, and we'll look at one another and we'll go, you know, we're never going to be a vision formed family.

And I love Doug Phelps, I've told Doug Phelps that. I mean, here's the thing, our family could be really disappointing probably to people who really know how to do this stuff. But I don't think anyone could doubt that the gospel, we make much of the gospel.

And much of Jesus. And that's the main thing that I want. Is that my boys, my daughter, have a loyal heart to Christ.

And I'm not going to sweat a lot of the small stuff, loyalty to Christ. Loyalty. Now, if I was in a church where everybody was just wild and there were no biblical principles and no men taking their family seriously, I'd probably be preaching the very opposite of this message.

But we're in a church where men, a lot of men are wanting to take their family seriously. Mothers who are really wanting to do things right. And I so appreciate that.

But believe me, you and I, we need to hear messages like this, that we're not going to make anything an emphasis except Christ. Christ and Christ alone, if you're here and you don't know him, come talk to me after the service, if you have any doubt that you know him. You must be born again, and the evidence of being born again is that your life begins to change and it changes because you've been given new desires, you really love him and you really want to serve him.

Come talk to me or talk to one of the other ministers or some of the other men or some of the other ladies. Please don't leave here today without knowing Christ, please, please. There'll be other times when I come up in this pulpit, I'm going to teach on family.

I almost did today. And I really want to, you know, really hit on the men what we need to be doing. And talk about family and talk about children and talk about marriage and all these things.

But before I could ever start something like that, I've got to give this message. That this church is to be about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen. Let's pray.

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