

Sermon Notes for October 18, 2015

**Sermon Series On I Timothy  
For The Love Of The Church  
“Paul’s Wise Words To A Young Pastor”  
I Timothy 1:18-20**

**Introduction**

**A. We Continue Our Sermon Series On The Book Of I Timothy**

1. a book that explains to Christians how the church is to operate
  - a. and, it is not on a business model
  - b. and, it is not on an entertainment model
2. this is a book that The Apostle Paul wrote to a young spiritual leader named Timothy
  - a. to tell him how a church is to operate Biblically
  - b. it is my belief that only the Biblically focused church will last
  - c. Paul shows Timothy how the church was formed and how it will continue to be formed

**B. Today, We Look At Paul’s Comments To A Young Pastor**

1. Timothy was Paul’s best friend and confidant
2. but, Timothy was also Paul’s greatest and dearest “project”
  - a. Paul spent more time with Timothy than any other person during his 30-year ministry
  - b. Paul “poured” his life into this young Pastor
  - c. **II Timothy 2:2** – “ And the things **you have heard me say** in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”
3. today, not only will we see the dynamics of the mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy, we will also see some of the greatest advice that any Pastor or Christian can hear about living the Christian life.

**I. A FATHER’S ADVICE TO A YOUNG PASTOR**

**A. The PERSPECTIVE OF PAUL TOWARD HIS SON, TIMOTHY**

**Vs. 18a** – “Timothy, **my son**, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you.”

1. Paul actually considered Timothy to be his son
  - a. because Paul used the greek word: **teknon**
    1. a word that referred to a son who was physically born to a father (not adopted)
    2. obviously, Timothy was not Paul’s biological son, so why would Paul refer to Timothy in this way?
  - b. Paul led Timothy to a saving faith, probably on his first missionary journey, to Lystra, Timothy’s hometown.

2. in an eternal perspective, Paul “birthed” Timothy, so that Timothy will live forever
  - a. an earthly father “births” a child during his time on this earth;
  - b. so, let me ask you; which father made the greatest impact on Timothy; his “earthly father” or his “heavenly father”?
3. whatever Paul thought of Timothy, he treated Timothy like a father “should” treat his children
  - a. spending time with him as an example
  - b. teaching him the Word of God
  - c. training him in the work of the ministry
  - d. Paul’s method was a continual, hands-on type of “fathering”

## **B. The PERSPECTIVE OF TODAY’S FATHER TOWARD HIS CHILDREN**

1. let me speak for a minute to fathers:
  - a. despite the fact that Paul was not Timothy’s biological father
  - b. Paul does teach biological fathers how to raise their biological children
2. here is what today’s fathers can learn about “fathering” from the Apostle Paul
  - a. **be a model to your children of what it means to be a Christian**
    1. no matter who else your children are watching; **you are the model** that will either affirm or deny the reality of Jesus Christ in their life
    2. whether you fathers know it or not; whether you are ready to be a spiritual example to your children; you are
      - a. and, you are either being an accurate, Biblical model for your children
      - b. or, you are giving your children an example of what a Christian is **NOT**
  - b. **lead your children to Christ**
    1. there is no greater honor, joy or miracle than to witness the physical AND spiritual birth of your children
    2. do not defer that honor to the staff or another Christian friend
    3. that should be **your** honor and **your** responsibility
  - c. **train your children to serve by serving WITH THEM in ministry**
    1. there is no greater impact for a child than to see their parent in service
    2. because, if that matters to dad, it should matter to your children
  - d. **pray for your children CONSTANTLY**  
**II Timothy 1:3 – “I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as **night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.**”**
    1. EVERY DAY a father should pray for each individual child
    2. **Dr. James Dobson** spent every Tuesday of his life fasting and praying for his two children
  - e. **spend individual time with each child**
    1. Timothy spent tremendous amounts of individual time with the Apostle Paul
      - a. traveling from city to city together

- b. experiencing a time of blessing and struggles
- 2. every time that the combination goes from three people to two, it gets stronger, more personal and more effective

## II. Paul's ADVICE TO TIMOTHY, A YOUNG PASTOR

### A. Paul CHALLENGES TIMOTHY TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

**Vs. 18** – “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may **fight the good fight,**”

- 1. do you find it strange that one of the first instructions that The Apostle Paul wrote to a young Pastor was to get ready for a fight?
  - a. is Paul referring to the fight between Christians in the church?
    - 1. because there are many, many fights within a church; between Christians
    - 2. **Craig Barnes**, who at one time pastored the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., once found himself embroiled in a bitter dispute **over a coffee table:**

One spring, the hospitality committee put a little coffee stand in the narthex. The next day, the head usher of twenty-five years quit to protest, saying this was a sacrilege to the church sanctuary. All the ushers quickly became upset.

Since a committee had put the coffee there, the elders had to decide on the issue, so they set up a **task force that met for eight weeks** to listen to the ushers and the hospitality committee.

One Sunday, a bunch of ushers decided not to show up to usher because we hadn't brought back the head usher yet. So, then the elders were ticked off at the ushers.

In the middle of that I am thinking; “I'm not talking about Jesus to anybody. I'm not making hospital calls, or shepherding people through grief. **I'm trying to figure out whether we should serve coffee in the narthex.**”

- b. based on what I have experienced in ministry, I would understand if Paul **were** talking about fighting fellow believers
  - 2. please note Paul's clear teaching about **who** the Christians' fight is against! **Ephesians 6:12** – “**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
    - a. **OUR FIGHT IS NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD BUT AGAINST SATAN!**
    - b. so, what “kind of fight” will it be?
      - 1. it will be dirty
      - 2. it will be evil
      - 3. it will be confusing
      - 4. **AND, IT WILL BE CONSTANT!**
- Warren Wiersbe** – “**Each local church is in a constant battle against the forces of evil.**”

3. notice that this will be a “hard fight”
  - a. it seems to me that most believers do not realize that they are actually in a fight
    1. that is because most believers are not **“in”** the fight!
      - a. these individuals are like the cooks and those who service the soldiers on the front line
      - b. so, while the soldiers are on the front line fighting for their lives, those serving the soldiers are miles away **from** the front line!
    2. ask the folks in our church who are on the front line what the battle is all about
      - a. ask those who are in the revival prayer cells
      - b. ask those who are teaching and discipling our young people, especially those young people who are considering full-time ministry
      - c. ask our staff who show up here every day to serve Jesus
      - d. ask the elders who spiritually lead our church
      - e. ask missionaries on the foreign field
        1. my trips to East Berlin
          - a. a dark, Satan-filled city
          - b. a city of darkness through both World Wars
          - c. the throne of Satan in the Pergamon Museum in (slide)  
**Revelation 2:12-13a** – “To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where you live—**where Satan has his throne.**”
          - d. a Baal altar in one of the parks (slide)
          - e. cassette tape strewn over our path during a prayer walk
          - f. the missionaries’ account of confrontation with dark spirits in their homes
        2. France: a sectarian country
- b. as soldiers say about war; “war is hell.”
  1. well, believers; we are in a war
  2. and, “it is hellish” because of who we are fighting against
- c. this war is **not** a “picnic”: (from I Timothy commentary by Philip Ryken)
 

“There had been talk of war for months, ever since South Carolina fired on Fort Sumter in early April of 1861. Both the North and the South hurriedly prepared for the conflict. By early July, each side was ready for war and certain of an easy victory. When Union general Irvin McDowell addressed his troops on the eve of battle, **his only fear was that the enemy would be unable to put up a good fight.**”

The first shots were fired in northern Virginia late on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July and news of the skirmish reached Washington by nightfall. **Since a Union victory seemed inevitable, the battle was treated as the social event of the summer.** The next morning, the ladies and gentlemen of high society gaily packed their hampers, piled into carriages, and rode to Bull Run for a picnic.

But the day turned out to be anything but festive. **The scene of battle was one of unimagined chaos and horror.** The Union commanders were simply unaccustomed to warfare on such a grand scale. The armies did not so much engage as collide. The fighting was fierce until Stonewall Jackson led the Confederate soldiers on a bayonet charge. The Union was routed, with three thousand soldiers left dead or bleeding on the battlefield. **The Washington socialites ran for their lives, their army defeated because it was not ready to fight.”**

4. however, realize that it is a “good fight”
  - a. notice that Paul used the greek word for good; **kalos**
    1. beautiful, handsome
    2. surpassing
    3. useful, excellent
  - b. of all of the battles and wars that believers fight, this is the “best,” the “most useful fight” of all fights
    1. it is the most noble of all battles
      - a. as believers, we are fighting the greatest battle of all battles
      - b. because, it is really the only battle that eternally matters
        1. yes, I know that there are good battles on this earth
          - a. World War I and II were good battles
          - b. the battle against ISIS is a good battle
        2. but, this battle is the battle for our eternal souls
    2. it is the most “nasty” of all battles
      - a. do you realize what Satan is like?
        1. his greek name is diabolos
        2. slanderer, the prince of demons
        3. persecutor
      - b. do you realize Satan’s goal?
        1. he knows that he is “going down”
        2. and, he wants to take as many with him as possible
        3. he makes the greatest murderers in history look like Little Red Riding Hood
        4. after all, who do you think caused or encouraged those mass murderers to make those choices?

- c. it is a good fight, because it is over “good truth”
  - 1. we are not fighting about the color of the carpet or whether to paint the bathrooms white or beige
  - 2. **Philip Ryken**

“The good fight is the struggle to defend those doctrines which are essential to the Christian faith. This includes doctrines like the reality of the Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ, the necessity of atonement for sin, the sufficiency of Christ’s death on the cross, the efficacy of faith alone for justification, and the infallibility of Holy Scripture. Such deep theological truths are well worth fighting for.”

## **B. Paul CHALLENGES TIMOTHY TO HOLD ON TO THE FAITH**

**Vs. 18-19a** – “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight **holding on to faith** and a good conscience.”

### 1. the **place of faith**

#### a. what faith is **not**

- 1. Paul is **not** talking about a faith that is “a hope so”
- 2. Paul is **not** talking about “a faith in faith”
  - a. speaking of faith as if “there is some cosmic computer” somewhere out there that you can trust.
  - b. as I often hear: “You just have to have faith.”
  - c. quotes:
    - 1. French philosopher – **Francois Voltaire** – “Faith consists of believing things only because they are impossible.”
    - 2. German scholar – **H. L. Mencken** – “Faith is an illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible.”
    - 3. Danish philosopher – **Soren Kiekegaard** – “believe in a leap of faith;” i.e. just leap somewhere

#### b. what faith **is**:

- 1. Biblical faith is the “highway to God”
  - a. it is “the way” that sinners come to God
  - b. please notice how Scripture describes faith:
    - 1. **Romans 1:17** – “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by **faith** from first to last, just as it is written: “**The righteous will live by faith.**”
      - a. Paul uses this greek word; **ek**
      - b. by, and of, on, with

2. **Ephesians 2:8** – “For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith**--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”

- a. use the greek word, **dia**
- b. through, with, for, in
- c. by means of

## 2. **BIBLICAL FAITH IS A “REAL THING”**

- a. we “get on” the faith highway
- b. and “travel” on that faith highway to a God who exists

c. Indiana Jones illustration

- d. ultimately, it all depends on what your faith “is in”

“A few years ago, there was a story about a man by the name of Larry Walters, a 33-year-old when the incident occurred. He decided he wanted to see his neighborhood from a **new perspective**. So, he went down to the Army surplus store and bought forty-five used weather balloons.

That afternoon, Walters strapped himself into a lawn chair, to which several of his friends tied the weather balloons that he had filled with helium. He took with him, something to drink, a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich, and a BB gun, figuring he could shoot the balloons one at a time when he was ready to land.

Walters assumed that the balloons would lift him about 100 feet in the air, but was caught off guard when the chair skyrocketed more than **11,000 feet into the sky**—into the middle of the air traffic pattern at Los Angeles International Airport. He was too frightened to shoot any of the balloons; so he stayed airborne for more than **two hours**. The airport was forced to shut down its runways for much of the afternoon.

Soon after he reached the ground, he was arrested.

Reporters asked him three questions:

“Were you scared?” “Yes.”

“Would you do it again.” “No.”

“Why did you do it?” “Because you can’t just sit there.”

- e. slide of man and balloons

## 2. the **practice of faith**

- a. not only is faith “the way” that we come to God, it is the way that we **continue** to walk with God
- b. so, **not** only does the “faith highway” becomes the way that we go “to” God it also is the way that we “go back and forth” to God

- c. now, we must realize that Paul's instructions to Timothy is showing the way that the Christian is to "fight the good fight" it is, "by faith"
1. Paul is teaching Timothy that one's faith is a critical "tool" or "weapon" that we use in our fight with the enemy
  2. I think of Biblical faith as a "muscle"
    - a. the moment we are physically born, we are born with muscles
    - b. however, if we ever want to "use these muscles" we were born with, we need to train these muscles
      1. my experience with pushups a few days ago
      2. so, how do we train our "faith muscles?"
  3. **THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR WEIGHT TRAINING KIT!**
    - a. **Romans 10:17 - KJV**– "So then, **faith** comes by hearing and hearing **by the Word of God.**"
    - b. The Apostle Paul is CLEARLY teaching, by the greek, that the Bible **is the means** through which our faith is strengthened
      1. **faith – pistis**
      2. **comes**
      3. **by – ek**; from; out of, with; away from
      4. **hearing – akoe**, the organ of hearing instructions
      5. **by – dia**; through; because of; with; during
      6. **the Word of God** – rhema; the utterance of God
- d. what Paul is saying to the Christian is this:
1. **THE WAY** that the believer will be able to "fight the good fight" will be by being in the Word of God DAILY!
    - a. my experience in discipling over 35 years
      1. most believers that I start meeting with are **not in** the Word of God daily
      - 2.. most believer that I start meeting with **don't know how** to be in the Word daily
      3. most believers that I start meeting with **are not** doing well in their spiritual life **BECAUSE** they are not in the Word of God daily
        - a. instead, they are trying to fight the good fight by eating:
          1. Little Debbie's
          2. and Krispy Kreme donuts
        - b. thus; they have no power, no energy, and . . . no faith

- b. if you are like most of the men that I have disciplined, more than likely, many of you are not in the Word of God daily as well
- c. and, you are a “sitting duck” for the enemy
  - 1. you are weak, tired
  - 2. WITH NO DEFENSE
  - 3. like a sniper, Satan just “picks you off”
- 2. the Word of God is where the believer gets the power, the energy, and the desire “to fight the good fight”
  - a. by reading God’s Word daily to be reminded:
    - 1. who is our Savior?
    - 2. what is our goal?
    - 3. who is our solution?
    - 4. how can I be involved?
  - b. when you are not reading God’s Word, you have no faith. . .AND, NO FIGHT!

### C. Paul CHALLENGES TIMOTHY TO HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE

**Vs. 18-19a**– “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith **and a good conscience.**”

- 1. please realize that there is another necessity for the believer to be enabled “to fight the good fight” AND, please notice that it is **NOT**:
  - a. the use of his spiritual gift.
  - b. the need to be more involved in spiritual ministry.
  - c. the call to be more involved in prayer.
- 2. instead, it is the need for “a good conscience”
  - a. the Apostle Paul was **COMMITTED** to having a clear conscience, ALL OF THE TIME
    - 1. **Acts 23:1** – “Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God **in all good conscience to this day.**”
    - 2. **Acts 24:16** – “So I strive always to **keep my conscience clear before God and man.**”
    - 3. **Romans 9:1** – “I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, **my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—**“
    - 4. **II Timothy 1:3** – “I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, **with a clear conscience**, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.”
  - b. why was Paul so committed to having and ministering with a clean, clear conscience; and what does one’s faith and conscience have to do with one another?
    - 1. while faith is the means by which we are encouraged in the Christian life

2. our conscience either encourages or indicts us to be able to continue in our service to Jesus
  - a. we can have all of the faith in the world, and know the Word of God backwards and forwards
  - b. but, our conscience is the filter through which our faith works
  - c. if our conscience is conflicted or guilt ridden
    1. we will **not** want to serve Jesus
    2. we will have **no** energy to serve Jesus
- c. it has been my experience in ministry to say that there is nothing more powerful in ministry than the “free flow” between one’s Biblical faith and one’s clear conscience
  1. so, faith “feeds” our desire to serve Jesus
  2. and a clear conscience “enables” and encourages us to delight in serving Jesus
  3. slide of faith and conscience
3. there are three “kinds of consciences”
  - a. a **pure, clean conscience**
    1. this is the conscience that has fully repented
    2. this is the conscience that is not harboring sins
    3. this is the conscience that has opened up his heart to Jesus to ask Him to reveal your deepest sins
    4. I do this every day as I begin my quiet time
  - b. a **seared, guilty conscience**
    1. this is the conscience of one who is not willing to confess and repent of his sin
    2. this is the one who has a habitual sin that they are not willing to deal with
    3. this is the person who is harboring resentment toward another and is not willing to forgive that person
  - c. a **dead conscience**
    1. this is the person who has held on to their lack of forgiveness and lack of repentance for so long that their conscience has become hard and calloused
    2. because of this, they feel no guilt
      - a. they can act, say and respond in any way that they like and not feel any guilt
      - b. their emotions feel no pain, no joy and certainly no sense of God
4. if you have any hope of “fighting the good fight”
  - a. get back into the Word of God on a daily basis
  - b. and get on your knees and ask God to reveal your deepest, darkest sins to you; and confess and repent of them.

### III. The APOSTLE'S WARNING TO A YOUNG PASTOR

#### A. Paul's REFERENCE OF THOSE WHO DID NOT RESPOND TO PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS

**Vs. 20** - "Among them are **Hymenaeus** and **Alexander**, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme."

1. as Paul told others about the necessity of watching one's faith and conscience, he referred to two men who did not practice his words
2. please notice that each of these men had, at one time, been involved in Paul's ministry
  - a. I am sure that Paul trained these men
  - b. I am sure that Paul thought that these men had credible testimonies
  - c. I am sure that these men served with Paul in the ministry
3. the men

##### a. **Hymenaeus**

**II Timothy 2:16-18** - "Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are **Hymenaeus** and **Philetus**, **who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.**"

1. according to Paul's own words, Hymenaeus was a man who had been in Paul's ministry
2. and, despite Paul's teaching, Hymenaeus was teaching that the second coming of Christ had already occurred

##### b. **Alexander**

**II Timothy 4:14** - "**Alexander the metalworker** did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done."

1. here was a man who had also served with Paul
2. who was personally attacking Paul's ministry; "who strongly opposed Paul's message."

4. how in the world did Hymenaeus and Alexander go from serving in ministry with Paul, to opposing the Apostle Paul?

##### a. according to Paul, these men:

1. got out of the Word
2. and did not keep a pure conscience
3. quotes:

a. **John Calvin** - "A bad conscience is the mother of all heresies. If we disregard the voice of conscience, our faith will not long survive."

b. The Scottish Pastor, **John Willison**, a word to Pastors: "If we would advance the church's credit, and avert her reproach, let us all be careful to preach to our people by our lives as well as by our lips, to conform our doctrine in the pulpit by our conversation out of it. **Let us mind, that a loose way of living will soon demolish all that is built by the most lively way of preaching.**"

- b. I have to admit; of all of the areas that I work on the most; the two areas that free me and energize me to serve Jesus; is
  - 1. being in the Word of God, DEVOTIONALLY
  - 2. and, asking God to reveal my sins so that I can deal with those sins and dealing with them THAT VERY MINUTE!
    - a. my recent experience with a microwave repair
    - b. I will go to any length to restore a broken relationship or deal with my sin, because I want to live in the freedom of a clear conscience

## B. Paul's RESPONSE TO THOSE WHO DID NOT RESPOND TO PAUL'S MESSAGE

**Vs. 20** – “Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, **whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.**”

1. The Apostle Paul practiced church discipline
  - a. **Matthew 18:15-17** – “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' **If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.**”
  - b. **I Corinthians 5:1-2** – “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! **Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?**”
2. our denomination's process of church discipline
  - a. admonition
  - b. censure
  - c. ex-communication
3. look at the severity of Paul's discipline of the two men
  - a. he handed them over to Satan
  - b. not only did Paul kick them out of the church, he gave them over to Satan
    1. **John Phillips** – “Nothing could be more solemn than to be apostolically handed over to Satan; excommunicated from the church; thus thrusting the offender back into the world where Satan is loved and worshipped.”
    2. like the Apostle Paul, the church **must** practice church discipline or else risk losing the Lord's blessing on that church
4. as Paul said, these men “made a shipwreck” of their lives
  - a. now; why do ships wreck?
    1. **Costa Concordia**; January 13, 2012, hit an underwater rock near the coast of Tuscany

2. most shipwrecks occur because the Captain does not know where he is going or how close to shore he is; it is obvious that the Captain did not have all of the facts
3. “One of the most infamous wrecks in British naval history happened on October 22, 1707, on the rocks off the Scilly Islands. Five warships were sailing back to England from Gibraltar but they were not sure how far from Cornwall they were. At that time, there was no foolproof means of determining longitude, especially on star-less stormy nights. The navigators were summoned by the Admiral to put their heads together and tell him where they were, because the captain feared that the ships might fall on coastal rocks. The navigators’ consensus was that they were safely west of the Brittany peninsula. Then, a midshipman, who claimed to have kept his own reckoning of the fleet’s location during the whole trip, took his life into his hands and approached the Admiral. The midshipman told the captain that, by his own calculation, they were much nearer the Scillies. Such subversive navigation by a common seaman was forbidden in the Royal Navy and the Admiral had him hanged for mutiny on the spot. On that foggy night, that anonymous seaman was proved to be right and the Scillies became unmarked tombstones for two thousand of the island sailors, as the ships went down like stones. Only one warship was spared. The navigators had no reliable external authority to tell them where they were and how far they were from home. It was not until John Harrison invented, the chronometer in 1737, that ships could know their exact location.”

### Conclusion:

1. What is Paul’s “formula” for Christian workers as well as all Christians to live effectively on this earth?
  - a. hold on to your faith
    1. daily
    2. devotionally
    3. in His Word
  - b. and work on, focus on, and do everything that you can do to have a clear conscience
2. And, what happens when you **do not** work on these two areas?
  - a. the church at Ephesus was a good “PCA” church
    1. **Revelation 2:2-3 –“I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men that you have tested those who claim to be Apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.”**

2. **Revelation 2:4** – “Yet I hold this against you: **You have forsaken your first love.**”

3. how do you stay in love with Jesus?
  - a. be in His Word daily
  - b. and, keep a clear conscience
4. today, there is no more church at Ephesus
  - a. it is gone
  - b. no one is left

b. First Presbyterian Church; Jackson, Mississippi

1. one of the most solid Biblical churches in America; a foundational church that helped form the PCA

2. a foundational church that helped start Reformed Theological Seminary

3. A word of caution from one of its Pastor in a sermon: **Derrick Thomas** “Don’t ever think, for one minute, friends, that the faith is secure here in First Presbyterian Church; that because of the age of this church, or the history of this church, or the caliber of our elders and former ministers. Don’t ever think, for one minute, that the truth of faith, the doctrines of the gospel, the fundamentals of Christianity, are safe in this church forever! **You’ve got to hold on to it! You’ve got to keep it. You’ve got to do a conscious act of maintaining that truth, and of holding on to that truth.**

Do you know how long it would take for a church to lose the truth, to part company with the gospel? Do you know how long it would take? One generation, that’s all. **It would just take one generation.** That’s all. It would just take the nomination and election of a group of elders who are not committed to the truth, and in one generation’s time you’d see a departure. It would just take the calling of a wrong kind of Pastor to the pulpit of this church, over one generation.”

4. **Craig Larson**, contributing editor for *Leadership Journal*, suggests an analogy between the Christian life and the life of the Alaskan bull moose. Every fall, the bulls in the moose herd battle each other for dominance, using their antlers as weapons. If a bull moose’s antlers are broken in battle, he must surrender. The moose with the strongest antlers always triumphs.

But though the battle may be fought to the fall, it is won or lost during the summertime, when the moose is nourishing himself. **The moose who consumes the most complete diet for gaining muscle and growing antlers will prevail in the fall.**