Ekklesia **– wk 1 - The Foundation**

**Heading back to school – texts books – if never used would be no help. The bible was not made to keep our coffee tables down or something to carry to show people… but a manual - a text - for life.**

**While the will of God is more like a game plan - The word of God is the blueprint. 1 Timothy the blueprint for church**

**Sitting around a fire when Jesus asked who do others say I am? Mt 16**

***Who, What & Why?*****1 Timothy 1:1** **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, 2 To Timothy my true son in the faith:** **Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**(Tells us up front who it is by and to - This is what is known as an epistle or letter from Paul – written to Timothy to encourage him as a pastor. Paul is not writing simply as a friend with suggestions – but by the command of God)**

**3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer… (Paul planted the church and left Timothy to get them on the right track.)**

**A little jump forward - 1 Timothy 3:14-15 – Tells us the reason for this letter - Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that,** **15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.**

**This a letter about doing church God’s way. They called it Ekklecia / Ecclesia = to gather together for his purpose**

**The key players – Paul: started the church stayed a few years and then left it in the hands of a young pastor named Timothy (his protégée). In Philippians Paul said Timothy was the closest person he trusted – Timothy is mentioned 17x in ten book in the NT.**

**I love this = notice v 15: I am writing this…**

**15 … so you will know how people ought to conduct themselves…**

* **There is a right way and a wrong way to do church**

**We are to show up and wing it! Go with the flow – and do whatever. There is to be a measure of order – in the freedom.**

**…in God's household,**

* **This is God’s family – we are a family**

**We are brothers and sisters. Look at your family next to you.**

**Don’t take this lightly! Church is a God thing, not man thing.**

**God is the architect, the builder, lives here, provides for it, is honored and rules here. Not a place – but us gathered together.**

**…which is the church of the living God,**

* **Not a dead God at a dead place – but alive!!!**

**A living God at his living house – alive with his spirit. Effective to touch & change the world. Matt 16:18 gates of hell can’t stop us!**

**The church… the pillar and foundation of the truth.**

* **The church is the pillar and foundation of Truth!**

**Build by Jesus to be the foundation of all he does and to hold up (pillar) the truth of God! Where God and his truth is exalted!**

**Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to deal with problems that many churches still deal with today – They were missing the main thing, chasing after religious stuff – weird doctrines and playing church…**

**The place to start in understanding Ekklesia – the designers blue print – the Bible. Ephesus struggled w/ The Use and Misuse of God’s Word**

**The Bible can mess you up – if it is not understood correctly**

**Who can admit you don’t know how to use a compass? Ever made 1? May be high tech, but if you don’t know how to use it – you’ll get lost**

**Today we are going to talk about how to recognize dangerous bible teaching, how to recognize the real deal – and how to use the Bible.**

**How do you make a name for yourself among others in a profession? (True in every field) – Same with Bible teachers…**

* **Have a new and novel idea… They attract attention**
* **Make it deep and complex… They think their smart**

**What tends to happens to many Christians is, the longer you’re a Christian the more susceptible some are to believing garbage…**

**1 Timothy 1:3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work--which is by faith. 5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.**

**HOW TO RECOGNIZE DANGEROUS BIBLE TEACHING:**

**4 Things Paul mentions that are signs of bogus Bible teaching**

**1. *Contradiction***

**“…that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer”**

**Teaching that blatantly contradicts God’s word – clearly given.**

**Those who have complete disregard for what the Bible says. Basing beliefs on feeling and opinions. Intentional denial of truth.**

***2. Speculation***

**Command not to teach… “myths (fables) and endless genealogies” (superior lineage debates. NLT - “spiritual pedigrees”)**

**A focus on the minors! People often leave the real deal to chase after things like this - Theories – new ideas – fringe beliefs. Might be with prophecy – end times – Bible codes – gap theory.**

**Early church fell into this trap - strange ideas crafted the Gnostic writings – people still to this day chase them…**

**If it is speculative – if it is a guess – don’t chase it**

***3. Controversy***

**“They promote controversies rather than God's work--which is by faith.”**

**The is about - controversy among Christians. When we constantly argue over things that cause us to miss the main thing.**

**Arguments about politics, non-essential doctrines…**

**One of the marks of the misuse of the Bible is when it used to break us up into divisions - instead of drawing us together in Christ.**

**This does not give allowance to believe whatever we want (remember this is a charge to hold to the clear truth of God)**

**Plus mature Christians can disagree and be gracious**

**The three-strike rule of - Titus 3 - Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. 10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. 11 You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. 3 Strikes you’re out**

**We are to strive to hold truth and unity of faith – How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity. (Ps 133:1)**

**4. *Confident Ignorance***

**People who are so sure about something they know nothing about…**

**1 Tim 1:6 Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.**

**Deuteronomy 29:29 - The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. (God reveals some things – and hides some things – when it is reveals it is to his kids)**

**When we dig into areas God has chosen not to tell us about, we end up speculative – controversial – and become confidently ignorant…**

**Okay, but how do we know the real deal when we see and hear it?**

**1 Tim 1:4 …nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work--which is by faith. 5 The goal of this command is love (agape),**

**How to Recognize the Real Deal: How to know if it good bible teaching**

1. **It produces *agape* love (agape - compassion in action)**

**He says the whole goal of God’s word is that it produces God’s kind of love! Agape Love – sacrifices our needs & wishes to serve others.**

**This is not a touch feely love – but an action love, sometimes absent of feeling. It’s not emotional therefore unconditional.**

**If any Bible teaching produces pride, arrogance, selfishness, neglect, hatred, controversies – it is meaningless and empty talk.**

**1 Co 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, (I get the deep stuff) and if I have a faith that can move mountains, (that would get me on TV) but have not love (agape), I am nothing. (No matter how much I know or how powerful the prayers) 3 If I give all I possess to the poor (very generous giver) and surrender my body to the flames, (become a martyr) but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love (agape) is patient, and kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love (agape) does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (That is what Bible teaching is to produce. if it does not, stay away from it.)**

**The Church in Ephesus struggled with this – Rev 2 puts it this way - Revelation 2:1 "To the angel (overseer, pastor) of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lamp stands: (this is from Jesus) 2 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. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. (Sounds like a great church on the surface) 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. (We read this and think it means that we have lost the passion we once had… But This is about how they lost agape) 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. (Jesus was calling them back to action not to just a feeling)**

**They were moving more and more into their cliques of Bible knowledge and further away from what God called them to do.**

**Real Bible teaching is an inward work that produces outward change**

1. **It focuses primarily on 3 things: *Character*, *Obedience*, & *Maturity***

**1 Tim 1:5 The goal of this command (to teach clear and solid truth in church) is love (agape – compassion in action), which comes from a pure heart (Character) and a good conscience (obedience) and a sincere faith. (growing in trust in God)**

**When you read God word & hear God’s word taught ask yourself**

* **How is this shaping my character?**
* **How is this calling me to obey God?**
* **How is this helping me to trust God with my life?**

**What about the OT – it is full of rules – has strange stories, diets, customs, holidays… do I still do that?**

**Paul mentions this to Timothy too… 1 Timothy 1:8 We know that the law (the Torah – Moses writtings) is good if one uses it properly. 9 We also know that the law is made not for the righteous (okay then who is it for…) but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10 for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers--and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine 11 that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. (What he’s getting at – they used to believe that if they followed these rigid rules you would get to heaven)**

**HOW TO READ & RESPOND TO THE OT:**

**1) It is not a *stairway to heaven***

**Paul is telling us the (OT) is not the way to salvation, but it is for those who do not know God *so they can know how much they need God***

**Next time someone tells you must worship on Saturday, follow this festival, eat his way, or uses the OT law to tell you how to know God. Read them this verse –**

**Romans 3:20 - Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.**

**It was never meant to be a stairway to heaven**

**The OT - reminds us of how short we are - OT Laws are a ruler to see how short we are (tap measure) but we like to get shorter people so we can look taller next to them.**

**2) It *exposes* our *sin***

**What do you do when you see a wet paint sign? We always touch it… we don’t like being told what to do… The law is the “wet paint sign”**

* **It tells us what is wrong in us – we lie, steal, murder, cheat… it exposes our sin – the OT then points to the remedy…**

 **3) It *points* us to *Jesus*.**

**OT is a bright neon flashing sign saying that way to salvation. Jesus!**

**NT had not been complied or completed yet at the time of 1 Tim. They used the OT to point to Jesus and used the reaching of Jesus and the apostles to lead them.**

**This is where we start as a NT church. That is the main thing.**

**As we are about to move – we strive to be a NT church! Growing in our love, character, obedience, and faith in God!**

**If what you are reading or hearing does not do these things and ultimately point to Jesus – it will mess you up…**

**Like a compass – if it is used improperly – you will be lead astray.**

**Paul was challenged Timothy and us - to make sure our church knew how to use God’s word right.**

**Prayer – our need for God – salvation in Jesus alone.**