



SERIES:	20/20: Seeing Truth Clearly
MESSAGE:	Seeing Truth Clearly
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	2 Timothy 4:1-8

TRANSCRIPTION

Seeing Truth Clearly - 2 Timothy 4:1-8 - Skip Heitzig

[SHOUTING]

There is no god. I mean, look at what's going on. I am my own god.

God, Allah, Buddha, whatever.

He's just waiting to destroy us all.

There's like hundreds of gods. It's just that bumper sticker says, dog is my friend.

There is no God.

There is one true God. He's all-knowing, all-powerful and he loves you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[SHOUTING]

God isn't really something to worship.

He's just waiting to destroy all of us.

I guess there's a god out there somewhere.

I hope there is a god.

God isn't really something to worship.

[SHOUTING]

God is everywhere.

First of all, hello. Welcome to our study here in this new series we're going through, 2020. I want to welcome you to our campuses. This is something that we're doing for our campuses in Santa Fe as well as on the west side. And this is the feed for our online community as well that we've discovered has grown since COVID-19, and now is in many countries around the world.

We're grateful for that reach, and we're committed to continuing something that we were doing before, but not to this extent. That's why we've kind of beefed it up with an online presence and online chat room. We have pastors who are available if you're choosing to tap in this way. And we want to minister to you where you're at.

We understand that not everybody can get out, that not everybody is allowed to congregate at 100% yet. And some people have certain conditions that will keep them at home. We understand that. Some of you are just fearful. You just haven't gotten over the fear that was instilled in you at the beginning of this thing. We understand that as well. And so we're here to serve you.

But I trust you have a Bible. And if you do, turn in your Bibles to the book of 2 Timothy chapter 4 for this introductory message to this series that I'm calling Seeing Truth Clearly. You know, as we get older, our vision changes, right? Have you guys discovered that, any of you here? So it happens, they say, around age 40, sometimes in the late 30s on, and it's called presbyopia.

And it's where you lose elasticity in the lens of your eye, so you become far-sighted. You can't see things up close unless you have those cheaters, they're called, those reading glasses. Also, for a number of people, self included, I needed corrective lenses when I was just a wee lad, just a little boy. I had to have glasses.

And then later on when contacts were invented, I got contacts so I could see waves while I was surfing. That is literally what drove me to the optometrist. But I needed help to see clearly. Now, we have a term that is well-known called 20/20 vision. And that is simply normal vision.

What that means is it's what the average eye, the average person can see from 20 feet on an eye chart. If you can read an eye chart perfectly at 20 feet, you have 20/20 vision. Now, not everybody has that. If you have worse vision, say, 20/30 vision, it means what other people can see at 30 feet, a normal person, you have to be at 20 feet to see it.

Or if it's 20/40 what a normal person or I can see at 40 feet, you have to be much closer at 20 feet to be able to see it. And then it can get so bad that if you have vision that even with corrective lenses is 2,200 or worse, you are considered legally blind.

Not only can vision change, but spiritual vision can change as well over time. Things that we once saw clearly, things that seemed so black and white don't seem that way anymore. We get tainted. We get a little hazy. Life experiences do that to some. Sin does that to some. It produces a loss of sharpness.

Lines become blurred, and we can even become blinded to what was so clear at one time. All right 2 Peter chapter 1, Peter writes to a group of believers saying that they should be growing or adding to their faith.

And he writes, "The more you grow like this, the more you will become productive and useful in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop these virtues are blind, or at least very short-sighted. They have already forgotten that God has cleansed them from their old life of sin."

You may recall that Jesus spoke to religious leaders who claimed that they had 20/20 vision. They could see better than anybody else. Because of their pride, however, Jesus noticed they were blind.

He said in John chapter 9, "I have come to give sight to the blind and to show those who think that they can see that they are blind.' The Pharisees who were standing there heard him and asked, 'Are you saying we are blind?' Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty. But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.'"

Here's how it works. Spiritual vision, virtual sharpness, spiritual acuity belongs to those who have gone to Doctor Jesus, the ultimate optometrist, and admitted they need help. He'll fix you up if you come humbly. But spiritual blindness is in the Bible a metaphor for somebody who is unwilling or unable to see spiritual truth.

And that's what I want to talk to you about, because there is a crisis of truth today. And people that I meet all the time are cynical when it comes to truth. It's sort of like Pontius Pilate in the New Testament when he stood right before Jesus, who spoke of truth. And Pilate said cynically, "What is truth?"

That's how most people feel. It's impossible to actually know what truth is, according to them. Even with this coronavirus, we aren't sure what the truth is. We have heard so many quote unquote "experts" that have contradicted each other. And the models that they began with were not just a little bit off. They were totally wrong.

And so we've noticed the experts backpedaling to try to get us accurate information. And if you follow this, you'll pull your hair out. You'll go crazy. In fact, here's a little video to sort of illustrate the proper way to make it through the coronavirus.

Yeah, I really don't understand why everybody isn't following the same rules right now. They're very clear. So let's take a minute. Let's go over them again. First, you must not leave the house for any reason unless, of course, you have a reason and then you may leave the house. All stores are closed, except those that are open.

And all stores must close unless, of course, they need to stay open. This virus is deadly, but don't be afraid of it. It can only kill people who are vulnerable, and also those who are not vulnerable. We should stay locked down until the virus stops infecting people, and it will only stop infecting people if enough of us get infected that we build immunity.

So it is very important that we get infected. And also, do not get infected. You should not go to the doctor's office or the hospital unless you have to go there, unless, of course, you are too sick to go there. This virus has no effect on children, except for those children in which it affects.

The virus remains active on different surfaces for two hours, or four hours, or six hours. But in most cases, it's days and not hours, and it needs a damp environment or a cold environment that is warm and dry in the air, unless the air is plastic. Schools are closed, so you need to homeschool your children unless you can send them to school because you are not home.

If you are at home, you can school your children using various portals and online classrooms unless you have poor internet, more than one child, only one computer, or you are working from home. Baking cakes can be

considered math, science, or art. If you are home educating, you can include household chores within their education curriculum. And if you are home educated, you may start drinking at approximately 10 AM every day.

If you are not home educating children, you may also start drinking at approximately 10 AM. Masks are useless at protecting you against the virus, but you still need to wear one, because it can save lives. And in some cases, it may even be mandatory, but also maybe not. You must not go to work, but you can get another job, at which point you may go to work.

Stay home. I don't know how many more celebrities we need to have tell you how important it is to go outside and take care of your mental health. There is no shortage of groceries in the supermarket. There are simply many things missing. You don't need to go buy a bunch of toilet paper, but you should buy some in case you need it.

If you are sick, you may go out once you are better. But those in your household, they cannot go out once you are better unless, of course, they need to go out. Animals are not affected by the virus, except for that cat that tested positive in Belgium in February, plus a couple tigers.

The number of corona-related deaths will be announced daily, but we don't know how many people are infected because we were only testing those who are almost dead to determine if that's what they will die of. The people who die of corona who are not counted won't or will be counted, but maybe not.

To help protect yourself during these times, you should be eating well, and exercising, but exercising and only eating what you have at home to avoid going to the stores, unless you need toilet paper or a fence panel. It's important to get fresh air, but don't go to parks, but do go walk in other places. Just don't sit down, unless you are old or pregnant. But if you do sit down, don't sit for too long, unless you are old and you are pregnant, in which case you need to sit down.

But if you do sit down, don't eat, unless you've had a long walk, which you are allowed to do if you are old or pregnant, except for at times in which you aren't. Don't visit old people. But you have a moral obligation to take care of old people and bring them food and medicine. And finally, no businesses will go down due to coronavirus except those businesses that go down due to COVID-19.

I hope this cleared up any questions about what we should and should not be doing during this time. Please educate your friends and family with this information so we can remove any and all confusion surrounding this time. Thank you.

So this thing went viral, millions of views for the obvious reason. It illustrates the point that nobody really knows the facts of the coronavirus through this whole narrative. But now, let's get back to this epistle of 2 Timothy. Let me give you a little bit of a background to the letter. Paul is writing a letter to his protege named Timothy before he dies. These are the last words of Paul the apostle on record.

And largely, Paul is warning against apostasy, which is a word that means falling away, or the departure from the truth. People who depart from the truth because they are deceived is on Paul's mind throughout this letter. Somebody once said-- I think it's attributed to Mark Twain-- that a lie can travel halfway around the world while truth is still lacing up her boots.

Lies travel very quickly, and Satan trafficks in that. He's called the father of lies. And the Bible says Satan from the beginning questioned truth. He questioned God's truth. He said to our first parents in the garden of Eden, "Has God said?" When she said, "God said we can't eat of that tree," "Has God said?"

Now, that same question lingers today. Most are not sure what God has said. And so I think it's time-- and that's the reason for the series-- that we get a refresher course on the foundations of biblical faith. Today what I want to look at is Seeing the Truth Clearly. I want to give you three criteria, or three steps to Seeing Truth Clearly, three criteria for spiritual vision.

Be concerned, be cautious, be careful. Very simple, very straightforward. Be concerned, be cautious, be careful. First, be concerned about knowing the truth. In 2 Timothy 4 verse 1, I'll begin. "I charge you, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season."

"Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. But according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables."

"But you, be watchful in all things. Endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry." Now, I just read the first five verses. I want to string together a few words with you so you kind of get the gist of what Paul is writing to Timothy. Notice in verse two the little phrase, the word, the word.

Also in verse two, teaching. "Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching." So the word, link that together with teaching. Go down to verse three and notice the phrase sound doctrine. Go to the next verse, verse four, the truth. And then verse five, your ministry. Now, all of those terms are what we call appositional statements.

They all refer to the same thing. They're just kind of tweaked a little bit or nuanced a little bit. In other words, what Paul is saying to Timothy is, your ministry, Timothy, is to teach people the word, which is sound doctrine. That's what you are called to do. The word. What is the word? Well, it's the scriptures. The context shows us what it means.

So go back a little bit. Go back into chapter 3 verse 14. We always liked to read a little bit in advance to get the context of the text. In 3:14, it says, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned, been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them. And that from childhood, you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Now, we come to our text. "I charge you, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing in his kingdom, preach the word."

So that's what he is talking about. The word equals the scriptures equals sound doctrine equals truth. Truth is on Paul's mind throughout the entire books of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. In fact, in those two books, he mentions truth 11 times. In all of the writings of Paul, Paul talks about the truth 49 times. Why?

Because primarily, that's our identity. We are people of the truth. We follow the one who said, I am the way,

the truth, and the life. That's the scripture. We are people of the book. In the book of Daniel Chapter 10, it's called the scripture of truth, because the Bible is the truth about God.

It's the truth about ourselves, our condition, our need for Jesus Christ. The scripture tells us the truth. And truth is tied to this word that Paul seems to like a lot, because he uses it a lot. It's the word doctrine. Here, it's called sound doctrine. The word doctrine, "didascalía" simply means teaching or instruction.

And I say Paul liked it a lot because he uses the term translated doctrine 19 times in his letters. But I got to be honest with you. There are some words in the Bible I feel sorry for, and doctrine is one of those words. Because I hear how Christians talk about the word "doctrine," and it's not in a kind way. It's like they're prejudice against the word doctrine. It's treated like a bad word.

For instance, I've heard people express sentiments like this. Well, I don't want to discuss doctrine, because doctrine is so divisive. I just want to talk about Jesus, because Jesus is so filled with love. Jesus is simple. Doctrine is technical.

I've discovered, sadly, that many people treat their Bibles like they treat the owner's manual for their vehicle. I guarantee you have an owner's manual probably in the glove box of your vehicle. And chances are you've never consulted it, unless something goes wrong, of course. It's like, where is that manual? I got to figure this out.

And that's how we are with lots of gadgets. We never consult the manual until we are in trouble. My fear is that the manual for our lives, the Bible, the owner's manual, the instructions given to us by our manufacturer, are not consulted. They're overlooked.

And frankly, for a lot of people, preaching about what you feel is more important than preaching about what is true. No, no. I want to tell you about how I feel about the truth, not about the truth itself. My subjective feeling is more important than objective truth, and that's dangerous.

The prophet Hosea in chapter 4 of his little prophecy in the Old Testament said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Not lovey feelings, but lack of knowledge. In Acts, chapter 2 verse 42, the church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. That's first on their list.

The apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy chapter 4, "Until I come, give attention to reading, exhortation, and doctrine." To another protege of his, Titus, Paul will write, "Teach what is in accord with sound doctrine." Doctrine's all over the place. It just means sound teaching, solid teaching, good instruction. It's something that we should traffick in and be people of.

The late James Montgomery Boyce said something I want to read to you. He said, "We do not have a strong church today, nor do we have many strong Christians. We can trace the cause to an acute lack of sound, spiritual knowledge. Ask an average Christian to talk about God. After getting past the expected answers, you will find that his God is a little God of vacillating sentiments," end quote.

I think he hit the nail right on the head. Ignorance is not bliss. We are accountable to know truth, to know the truth. I had a friend who made it admission to me years ago. He left a Bible-preaching ministry for a church that sort of just trafficked in all relationship and feeling. And that became more important in the word of God.

And he came in and confessed to me some years later. He goes, I hate to say it, but my church has become biblically illiterate. They don't know their way around the scriptures. So be concerned about knowing the truth. That's the first step in seeing truth clearly.

Second, Paul would say, "Be cautious about neglecting the truth," verse three, "for the time will come when they will not endure or put up with sound teaching, good doctrine, sound doctrine. But according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

Our culture at large, the American culture, has rejected truth. And there is a number of reasons for that. One of the reasons is journalism in our culture has become sensationalized. Everything has spin on it. Information isn't just pure information. It's always skewed. Reporting is highly politicized and editorialized.

And the extreme examples of this is tabloid news. Have you ever just stopped in the grocery store and just looked at some of the headlines on tabloid newspapers? I do that from time to time. I write these things down or I search for them online. It's funny how people buy this. Obviously, it sells. They get bazillions of dollars from it.

But listen to these headlines from grocery store tabloids. Alien Mummy Goes on Rampage. That's the headline. Alien Mummy Goes on Rampage. Another one, World War II Bomber Found on the Moon. Another headline, Woman Gives Birth to a Two-Year-Old Baby, Child Walks and Talks in Three Days, right there on the front page.

Another headline, Eve was a Space Alien. Or how about this one? Ancient Photo of Jesus Found. See, that's 1,800 years before photography was ever invented, so that's interesting. Another headline Abe Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln, was a Woman.

And here's one that's a little more contemporary for this last week, Drinking Cow Urine can Ward Off Coronavirus. I don't know if anybody would ever want to try that. These are headlines. So people look at that and go, I can't believe that. Now, we look at those headlines. How do we know those aren't true? Because those are not verifiable.

You and I can't go to the moon and see if there's a bomber on it, first of all. A lot of these things we can't verify, or it doesn't fit into human experience. There's no test about cow urine protecting anybody from coronavirus. So we get into a whole realm of study called epistemology. And epistemology is how we know something is true. It's the theory of knowledge, how we can justify a belief in something. How do we know something is true?

Another reason that truth is rejected in our culture is that over time, truth has become less objective and more subjective. That is, it is personal truth. It is individual truth. It is variable truth. People won't talk about the truth. They'll say, well, that's your truth. My truth is different than your truth.

And one of the reasons for this is because objective truth speaks against us. It speaks against our lifestyle. It speaks against human preference. And so we say, there's no such thing as absolute truth. Years ago, many years ago, there used to be in this country what we call a moral consensus.

That is the general population believe that the Bible had enough moral truth that we could say the Bible is

true. There was a general belief that the Bible was true. Those days are long gone. Today, 24% only believe the Bible is the word of God. It is the lowest in Gallup organization's 40-year trend of beliefs in America.

The prevailing belief today is, well, how can anyone claim to have a corner on the market of absolute truth? In fact, you'll hear people say, there's no such thing as absolute truth. Ever heard people say that? Now, when a person makes that statement, there's no such thing as absolute truth, they have just given you a self-contradictory statement, because they're making an absolute statement.

There's absolutely no such thing as absolute truth. You can't say that, but they just said it. However, here's what I want you to look at in the passage. The passage, the warning here in these verses, the caution that Paul gives doesn't seem to be against unbelievers or the culture at large turning from the truth. They already have. We get that.

The warning by Paul the apostle seems that he is talking about believers who turned from the truth. For it says, "The time will come"-- he's anticipating a future change. "The time will come when they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables." It indicates that he's talking about people who once believed in this, once adhered to this.

It seems then that Paul is writing about superficial Christians, nominal Christians who joined the ranks with true Bible-believing Christians. But they proved their false identity eventually by rejecting the truth, the plain written truth of God.

According to Pew Research, 25% of American Christians believe God is a higher power-- these are Christians in America. 25, a full 1/4 believe God is a higher power, not necessarily an all-loving, omniscient, and omnipotent as the scripture reveals. He's not a personal God like the Bible says he is. He's just sort of this higher power that exists, and they call themselves Christians.

45% of US evangelicals will say many religions can lead to eternal life. So Christianity is not exclusive. Jesus isn't the only way, truth, or life. There are many roads to God. 45%, that's close to 50% of American evangelicals. According to the Barna Research group, only one half of our country's Protestant pastors-- 51% have a biblical world view.

Now, does that shock you? Half only of that pastors have a biblical worldview? An article in Christianity Today that I read. One out of five clergymen don't even believe in God. Now, this makes a little more sense. The caution makes a little more sense. It comes clear.

I found in an article this week called Preachers Who are Not Believers. It's based on a study conducted by the Center for Cognitive Studies at Tufts University under the direction of Daniel C Dennett and Lydda LaScola. Here's the quote.

"Many churches and denominations have adopted such fluid and doctrineless identities that determining who is a believer and who is an unbeliever has become difficult." Now, that is the reason for this series. The reason I am doing a series again on the foundations of what we believe is for those quotes that you just heard.

Somebody once said, and they said it well. Christianity is always just one generation away from extinction. All it takes is one lapse, a failure to pass it to the next generation, and that generation can be lost. Now, there's a few streams that feed into this apostasy, this turning away from the truth.

A few years ago, there was a movement that was very big, and a lot of people think it's gone, but it really hasn't. It's called the emergent church or the emerging church. It was a group of basically liberal pastors and theologians who wrote books and said the Bible isn't true. You can't trust it, et cetera.

And even though that term has gone away and those churches, many of them have become defunct, the leaders of that movement are still very influential and still writing books. And that movement has simply bled back into the institutional denominations of our country. So one of the leaders, Brian McLaren, emerging church leader when it first came out, said this.

"I don't know if anyone has ever gotten the gospel right" close quote. Now, listen to that statement. "I don't know if anyone has ever gotten the gospel right." So that would include Peter the apostle, he didn't get it right? John the apostle, he didn't get it right? Paul the apostle, he didn't get it right? So he is here 2,000 years later saying, they're all wrong. Nobody has gotten a right.

Another leader of that movement that has been very influential in the thinking of especially the young, Tony Jones said-- and I'm quoting-- "I am quite convinced the Bible is a subversive text. I think the Bible is"-- and it says expletive-- he uses the word "effing." And then he says, "Pardon my French."

He says, "I think that the Bible is a scary book. I think that deconstruction is the only hermeneutical avenue that comes close to expressing the transgressive nature of this sacred text. Let me tell you what that means. What he means is whatever the Bible says, you can't believe what it says. It doesn't mean what it says.

And I have to deconstruct it and show you that it doesn't mean what it says. It means something completely different than what it plainly says. OK, so that's modern times. Paul is writing this letter 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to show you how quickly things can turn.

And it doesn't take long to have a church that goes from a very high point to a very, very low point. It does not take much time. We're one generation away from extinction. Now, what's the problem that causes this? Well, according to Paul, itching ears, itching ears. Notice what he says.

"They will not endure sound doctrine according to their own desires. Because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers." That is, itching for novelty. That's the meaning behind that phrase "itching ears," itching for novelty. One translation, The Message, puts it this way. "People will have no stomach for solid teaching, but will fill up on spiritual junk food, catchy opinions that tickle their fancy."

Do you remember when Paul went to Athens in Acts 17, and he went on Mars Hill, and he was speaking to these great thinkers? And the writer of the book of Acts noted this. "For the Athenians and the foreigners spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing," some novel thing. Tell me something I've never heard.

Oh, that's weird. It must be true. Maybe I should believe that. Maybe I need to reject what my parents taught me. And so here's Paul the Apostle speaking to the Areopagus Mars Hill. And they're there to hear and tell some new thing, and Paul is there to bring absolute truth. The preacher they least want to hear is the preacher they need most to hear, and he's there.

The ancient Israelites rejected God and wanted a calf to worship, so they talked Aaron into making them one.

This stuff has gone on for generations. There's nothing new about it. In Jeremiah chapter 5, God said, "An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power, and my people love to have it so." My people love to have it so.

I read about a farmer who was feeding his mules oats, and he was all bent out of shape because oats started costing too much, and he didn't want to pay the extra. So he thought, I know what I'll do. I'll take a little bit of sawdust and mix it with the oats, and I'll feed it to my mules. And then over time, he put more sawdust, and more sawdust, and more sawdust.

And by the time the mule was satisfied with the sawdust, it was dead. You can't get nourished on something like that. There's nothing to it. It's vapid. It's vacant. There's no nourishment. God's people are starving because pastors pander to those who have itching ears.

So two steps. Be concerned. Be cautious. Be concerned about knowing the truth. Be cautious about neglecting the truth. Third and finally, be careful about nurturing the truth. After Paul gives the warning, notice how he begins verse five, "But you," "But you." In other words, in contrast to them, Timothy, you're different.

"But you must be watchful in all things, endure afflictions"-- and he's going to need to endure affliction if he speaks truth. "Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry." Now, let's just read a few more verses. "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering. The time of my departure is at hand." He means his death.

He knows that he is going to face the end of his life, and he did. Shortly after this, he was beheaded by Caesar Nero. He knew that was coming. But he says this, "I fought the good fight. I finished the race. I've kept the faith. And finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will give to me on that day. And not only to me, but also to those who have loved his appearing."

Timothy, in contrast to those who neglect the truth, you should hold to it. You should feed on it. And then Paul uses himself as the prime example. He fulfilled his ministry. He finished his task. He kept the faith. He ran the race. Now, this is our calling as men and women of God, as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ on Earth that Paul says is the pillar and ground of all truth.

This is our calling, to believe the truth, to love the truth, to speak the truth, to live the truth. We traffick in truth, the truth. Timothy is cited and mentioned in verse five, "But you," but I want to go back to the commandment he gave that we just sort of glanced over in verse two. Paul says to Timothy, "Preach the word."

Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season, when you feel like it and you don't feel like it, when it's convenient or inconvenient. "Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and" didache, teaching doctrine. Stay at it, Timothy.

He's commanded to preach, proclaim. herald. Kerusso is the Greek word, and it means to publicly announce. It is a word that in the New Testament times primarily referred to an imperial messenger, somebody who came from Caesar himself who represented Rome, and would go through the streets of a city making a proclamation with authority.

He would make announcements about special events, or the emperor coming to that region, or new laws, or new policies. He was called a preacher, a herald, a proclaimer. Using that word, Paul says, "Preach the word."

Preach the word. Now, just keep in mind Timothy is in a little town-- not in a little town-- a sizable town that Paul left him in called Ephesus.

In Ephesus, there were powerful orators, people who could speak and give speeches really, really well. Timothy was surrounded by sophisticated and gifted orators who were twisting the truth. That's the subject, one of the subjects of this book. And because of that, there were people who were turning away from the truth.

So because of that, the only antidote to that is to preach the truth, not to shy away from it. Not say, well if they don't want to hear it, I probably shouldn't say it. Let's give them what they want. No, here's the antidote. Preach the word. Preach. Don't preach your opinions. Don't preach your politics. Don't preach your culture. Preach the word.

He's referring to doctrine. Do you notice what he calls it? Sound doctrine. "For the time is coming when they will not endure sound doctrine." The word "sound doctrine" literally sound is hygienic. We get the word hygiene or hygienic from it. It's hugiano. Now, that's sound doctrine. What it means is it's healthy. It's good. It promotes life. It promotes healing.

So for the next several weeks, that's what we're going to do. We're going to dwell on sound doctrine. We're going to go to the optometrist, Doctor Jesus. He's going to check our vision. And we're going to see if what we believe, or have believed, or held to matches up with what he said is true objectively, eternally, and personally for you, the truth.

Dwight L Moody said, "The best way to show that a stick is crooked is not to argue about it or spend time denouncing it, but to lay a straight stick alongside it." That's what we're going to do in the next several weeks. We're going to look at the straight stick of the word of God, the scripture of truth, as it is called, to see these foundational truths.

Are you ready for the ride? Let's pray together. Father, we want to thank you for your word, sound doctrine, which is the truth. And we're so thankful that though we live in a post-truth culture, a post-modern culture, one that deconstructs everything that was once held dear and understood as morally correct, we still have the straight stick of the word of God, which never changes.

Your word is a lamp. It's a light. By it, we see everything else. I pray, Father, that you would enlighten our path, and you would use this time in these weeks together to sharpen our focus. Maybe we've become short-sighted or even blinded. Help us to see the truth, know the truth, love the truth, and live the truth. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hey, thanks for being a part of this series and this sermon. God bless you on the campuses. God bless you at home, no matter where you're watching in the world. And God bless you, our friends who are here today. See you later.

