

Healthy Church – The Gospel that Shapes the Church 1 Timothy 1

If I were to ask you “What makes a church a healthy church” what would you say? **What is one word or phrase that you would use to describe it?**

What does God’s Word say about the defining characteristics of a church, & the non-negotiables of what truly makes a church “healthy?” **1 Timothy 1**

Paul is instructing a young pastor (Timothy) about the distinguishing marks of a healthy, God-honoring, Christ-exalting, gospel-proclaiming church...

Vs. 5 – “The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

- 1) **You can’t have a healthy church without love...** meaning a love for God and a love for others!

All the law & the prophets... all of Scripture elevate these 2 things! Do we?

- 2) **You can’t have a healthy church without pure hearts...** meaning hearts that have been transformed and are continually being transformed...

The church is not full of perfect people, but forgiven people, seeking to become more like the One who redeemed them, by the power of the HS.

- 3) **You can’t have a healthy church without a good conscience...** meaning that sin is recognized, identified & addressed in the body of believers!

The conscience is “*the God-created self-judging inner voice of man. It affirms and accuses the actions & thoughts of a person*”... It identifies the difference between that which is of God & that which is sin.

The health of a church is directly tied to how they address sin!

- 4) **You can’t have a healthy church without sincere faith...** meaning a clear understanding of the gospel – that salvation is a gift of God by faith alone!

A sincere faith isn’t about how good we are, how much Scripture we know, or how involved we are in “Church”... **It is about receiving Christ & all His benefits!** Sincere faith always speaks in the 3rd person – “He”, not “I”!

When these are in place, the result is a healthy church that protects against:

- 1) **False teaching...** Example – “*myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than stewardship from God that is by faith.*” **Are we majoring in the minors, or in what’s most important?**

Vs. 6-7 – “Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.”

False teaching most often happens when we deviate from the gospel!

- 2) **Pretense and Hypocrisy** – Example - “*wolves in sheep’s clothing*”.

Pretense is defined as “*an attempt to make something that is not the case appear true*”... **Those who show up on Sundays but fail the test of faith!**

Hypocrisy is when you say/claim one thing but do another! You claim to follow Jesus, but your life reveals that you are after something else!

A common objection – “*I like your Christ but not your Christians!*”

- 3) **Unaddressed sin** – Example – when the church fails to call sin, sin... and when it also fails to address it with both “Law” and “gospel”. **Vs. 8-11**

“Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully... in accordance w/ the gospel of God” Both the law & the gospel address sin, & are needed

Only a balanced approach, like Paul’s experience, creates a healthy church!

Vs. 12-16 – Paul, a sinner... saved by grace... **Condemned under the law... Justified under grace** because of what Jesus Christ accomplished!

- 4) **A false gospel** that comes from a law-based, works righteousness, religion.

The gospel is good news precisely because it speaks to the really bad news that we all fall short of God’s standards & are deserving of hell!

A gospel that is dependent upon “us” is no gospel at all... & any church that doesn’t embrace the true gospel is not only not healthy but is not a part of the “true Church”. **The gospel is what gives SHAPE to the church!**

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