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Luke
Chapter 11 - A Polarizing Wish
Confronting the Obstructionist (vs. 45-52)

Luke 11:45-52: One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.” But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.’ Woe to you lawyers! For you

have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."

Well, it seems like everybody loves a dead prophet; nobody likes a living one. I mean, it's easy to celebrate somebody that's no longer talking to you. And in many respects, this is one of the things that Christ is saying. There is a fundamental point within the passage at large, and that is, if your heart's not right and if you're not looking for the right things, you have the wrong value system. And once you have the wrong value system, you literally focus on the minor, the things that aren't important. The way Jesus will put it in Matthew is, "You'll strain a gnat and you'll swallow a camel." And that literally means you're obsessed with minor things. You're not obsessed with the things that are important. So, that's why the text starts off with, "Thy kingdom come." Because I don't know what's important. I don't know what is most valuable. I mean, you find yourself getting fixated

on things, little things, stupid things, and you go, “Why am I so upset about that?” And you begin to realize that it just becomes a compulsion in and of itself. And of course, the Pharisees went down that path in the sense that they will tithe a mint and a dill and a rue in that particular sense. And He says, “Look, if you would think about what I'm really concerned about, and that's mercy. These things were meant to point to your devotion to Me. They weren't meant for you to get fixated on minor details.” And so, you begin to realize that man will go that route.

What is the fundamental problem? Well, Paul will actually talk about this to Timothy in the pastoral epistle of 1 Timothy in Chapter 4, and he'll make reference to the point that this is doctrines of demons. Now, what exactly are the doctrines of demons? Well, I think one of the reasons why he uses the phrase “doctrines” and doesn't speak in terms of some nefarious thing that maybe perhaps an evil spirit might do is that, as Paul will later on say to the Corinthians, that even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, as an apostle of Christ. So, what he's

talking about is in the church and in particular in the realm of religiosity, demons have their doctrines.

Now, the question is, what are their doctrines? I mean, how are they working? How are they actually moving people off of that which is important? Well, it's very simple. They just put them on the minor. They get them fixated on things that aren't important. It's no different than you get a choir in a church, and you get people in the choir, and before long, they're so focused on the music of the choir that they're not nice to the rest of the church. In fact, they actually see themselves as being elevated. There's an old saying that the choir is the place where the devil works. But I don't know if that's always true. I know that there are a lot of good people in the choir, so I'm not trying to knock the choir. But the point is that no matter what you do, you can make something a major that isn't. And the whole reason why the choir is there is to bring glory to God, right? You lose sight of that and you get fixated on the exact beats or the exact melody or whatever. And look, you want to do your best for the Lord. There's no doubt about that. But if that becomes

your fixation before long, there's argumentation, there's criticism; there's all kinds of things that come out of this. And before long, the demons have us fighting with one another. As we're supposed to come together to build up one another, we begin to tear each other down. So, it's that kind of mentality or mindset that has been infiltrating the religion at this time, and Jesus comes and He hits it head on. And it's one of the reasons why we're so drawn to Christ, because by virtue of His very name, He is truth. He says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” So, when truth walks in the room, it's like a light walk in the room and darkness dispels. And so, as Ephesians 5 says that truth goes into the room, and it even exposes, not by virtue of even what it says, but by virtue of what it does. And it begins to expose the evil. So, is Christ controversial? Yes, in the sense that He's looking for truth. And once you begin to expose the lie, then people get upset. People get upset when you tell them the truth because it's offensive to them; especially if they don't want to change. The reason why we're so drawn to people like the woman at the well or different ones within, in particular, I think of the blind man in the Gospel

of John, is they're so simplistic in receiving whatever Jesus said. I mean, the blind man's healed, and people go, “Really?” And he goes, “Yeah.” They say, “So, tell us how this happened.” “Well, I was blind and now I see.” So, there's no real complication in it, and it's just transparent, it's just clear, and that's the way that Jesus does things, because that's what truth is. Anytime you get something that's convoluted and twisted, that's a lie, because truth is clear. For God so loved you. But what does He mean by that? It means He loves you.

And so, as we come to this passage, we see Jesus really confronting these that are hypocrites. And I would say, hypocrisy is such a destructive force. Of course, as you will turn the page in Luke 12, He starts off and He says, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” And you come into Matthew 23, and how many times does He say, “Woe to you hypocrites”? So, it's that hypocrisy that's very destructive, and it's under that heading, if you look at 1 Timothy 4, that he says, fundamentally, this is doctrines of demons who sear their conscience by means of hypocrisy. So, it's a powerful

force, and Luke will deal with it in particular in Chapter 12 and state that this hypocrisy will cause you to be afraid. It'll cause you to have anxiety.

Why would that be true? Because hypocrisy is when you don't get real about your faith. And once you're not real about your faith, then you don't have anything to hold onto. And once you don't have anything to hold onto, you don't have an anchor, both sure and steadfast. Then everything that happens, you become anxious about and fearful about it because you're in charge. You know deep down inside that you don't really believe. You put on a facade, but nothing's real. And you don't have the real peace that God will give you. So, hypocrisy will take away that sense of confidence and that sense of love for God as well as when you consider, it'll sear your conscience; it'll cause you to be callous. Ephesians 4 talks about the fact that you become hard of heart and callous. And that's because you're never real in your relationships. So, everything is a facade. Well, once you start living in that particular realm, not only have you seared your conscience, you've seared the ability to feel deeply about

things or to care for people. And so, that literally creates a sense of hardness. So, this hypocrisy is a big issue with Christ and He begins to hit it straight on. And the thing that I like about it is that He's not apologetic about it. The world is very threatening and once you begin to say the things that are true, they begin to get upset. I watch this phenomenon all the time; the world starts going, “You're just not kind,” or “You're not thoughtful,” or whatever. And they start throwing these things out. And many Christians go, “Well, no, no, we're really nice people.” And then they begin to compromise the doctrine of God for the sake of just looking nice because they're so afraid that somebody's going to be critical. Jesus doesn't do that. Why? Because He's truth. And truth doesn't change. If truth changed, it wouldn't be truth. By virtue of the fact that it is absolute, it continues. It's unchangeable as God is immutable. That very fact is telling us that it is an anchor for our soul. It is something you could hold onto. And it is the greatest act of love. You know, people will say, “Because you told me the truth, you didn't love me.” Really? I mean, love rejoices in righteousness. It rejoices in the truth. It's that which proclaims this

unapologetically, because I know that nobody's going to get better unless they deal with the truth. And so, you need to proclaim it.

So, when you come to the passage, of course, the Pharisees are very upset. They're very angry about the fact that Jesus is coming with them with some sort of confidence and really a sense of condemnation about what they're doing. And literally, they are misrepresenting God. He's not going to let them get away with that any more than He would let the money changers go into the temple and take advantage of people. He's not going to do that.

So, as we come into Chapter 11 in verse 42, He starts off with,

(Luke 11:42) "<u>But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe</u>..."

And once again, the whole focus is that you're majoring on the minor and you've set aside that which is most valuable, as we read earlier the very text in which they were upset at Jesus because He was ignoring their traditions. And He says, "You're ignoring the

commandments of God." Once you get the wrong value system, nothing's right. And there is no middle road. And that's one of the things that this particular chapter is conveying, "If you're not with Me, you're against Me." (verse 23) Where do you feel the middle of the road there? I just don't feel it. So, is it true? Is it right? Then do that.

So, as we come to the passage, as Jesus begins to really reveal,

(Luke 11:43) "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places."

I think one of the most difficult things that I've had to deal with through the years in the church are people that are afraid to lose face. So, you can't really correct them, even though that's my job in many respects if they're doing the wrong thing in the church. I don't visit your house. I don't need to do that. "You're supposed to boil your egg this way." But my responsibility is to set you on a right path. Proverbs says a wise person loves the correction, loves the discipline, but that just doesn't seem to define our

society anymore. And people are really, really very possessive about saving their face. It's just an amazing thing to me. I'm going, “Really? You can't just get this right? I mean, I'm not going to make a big deal out of it but just get it right.” You know, they'll deny it, they'll reject it, they'll get angry at you. You're now the problem. And all you told them was, “You shouldn't do that.” Well, so there's a problem with the Pharisees.

And He says,

“Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.

(Luke 11:44) Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.”

“By virtue of you not majoring on what's important, the people don't know what's right. And you cause a lot of harm to their lives.”

(Luke 11:45) “One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.””

The word that he uses in the text is “*hybrizō*”. “*Hybrizō*” is actually, I believe, where we get the English word “hubris”. Now, “hubris” is a person that really exhibits extreme arrogance to the point of being dangerously overconfident. You ever had somebody like that? And they're extremely arrogant in this and delusional in their sense of self-worth. They ignore any warnings that you give them because they are not touchable in the sense of doing any wrong. So, we oftentimes make reference to the fact, “Well, that's great hubris that person's using.” And it's interesting that they're accusing Jesus of this, when they in fact are the ones acting this way. And this is kind of the way it goes. I mean, people will accuse you of not being right when they're not right. And Isaiah 5 says that's exactly what we do; we call evil good and good evil. So, we change things around.

So, interestingly enough, they're saying to Jesus, “Look, You've insulted us.” And they really have put Him on a level in which they are. In fact, just to show you a point here, if you back up into Luke 11:37, when Jesus was asked to go to lunch with the Pharisee, the word “ask” is

"*erōtaō*". That particular word means that "I see You on an even footing with me." So, he wasn't asking Jesus as Lord or master over him. He goes, "You and I are the same." It's only used in that regard, where you see somebody on equal footing with yourself. So, it just shows that there's no sense of respect for who Christ is, and they're naturally going to accuse Him of doing the very things that they're doing. We call it "projecting." But they're literally projecting their thoughts and their feelings on Him. But as Hosea says, God says, "I'm not a man. I'm not like you. I don't think like you." And I think it's important to realize that though Jesus is offending them, it's not the reason why He's doing it. He's doing it because He loves them. And it's always important because, of course, God is love. And so, everything He does is love. But once again, we have so confused the defining of love. We have so twisted it that we basically virtually have said, "Parents cannot correct their children because that's not loving," and that's not true. In fact, Scripture says you hate your child if you don't correct them. So, it's the love that is being displayed by virtue of the things that He's saying and He's bringing to light, and

He's saying, “You have a horrible future if you continue to think this way.” That's why He uses the word “woe”. It's going to be horrible for you if you continue to think this way. If you continue to think in a surface way; if you continue to focus on the minor things of life and get your focus off of what God is really looking for, you're just going to miss the boat completely. And exactly, that's what they're doing, and He's warning them. Are they taking the warning? They're fundamentally uncordial because they are full of hubris themselves.

(Luke 11:45) “<u>One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.”</u>”

And the word that is used for “lawyer” seems to convey that the lawyer saw himself as a step above a normal Pharisee. It's bad enough you're a Pharisee, right? But the lawyers saw themselves as a little bit better than the Pharisees. And in some cases, would write the inscription on the tombs and stuff like that. But they would make sure that everything was in orderly fashion. But these are the ones that were experts of the experts on the Law. You could probably, in some cases, actually refer to them as

“doctors of theology” or “doctors of the Law”. Nevertheless, they said, “Maybe we can understand You insulting the Pharisees, but us? We can't understand You.”

(Luke 11:46) “<u>But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! </u>...”

And here again, the point is, and the thing that I embrace in this text is He doesn't back off. The world tries to get you on the defensive. And I'm sure some of you have actually tried to witness to relatives. And here you are, and sometimes you can be in your own house, and you'll say something about Jesus. And they'll go, “No, you can't say that. It's offensive.” And I'm going, “It's my house.” I remember Connie and I were in a particular situation, and she had mentioned something about the Lord in this particular situation. And someone said, “We don't want you talking about that.” And she says, “Well, you may not like what I'm saying, but you can't tell me what to say.” It sounds like Connie, doesn't it? She's really a very nice person.

“But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.”

“You won't help them at all.” In other words, it's one thing to criticize somebody, it's one thing to point something out, it's another thing to try to help them. And that's clearly what Christ is trying to do, but He's saying, “You couldn’t care less. In fact, your whole desire is just to weigh people down. That's what you do. Because when you weigh other people down, you elevate yourself and you look superior.” And that's one of the great concerns oftentimes to the church. And one of the things that we try to stay away from in this, even in the pulpit area, in the sense of, you don't want people boasting about what they've done, or you don't want people bragging about their position or how many degrees they have or pedigrees, because once you start doing that, you start oppressing people that haven't had all those things. And Paul will clearly say in Philippians 3, “Whatever was gain for me, I count as loss for Christ.” So, our whole purpose

should be to build you up. In fact, in many respects, there should be the picture of actually putting somebody on your shoulders and elevating them. I mean, that's what the church should be doing. Nevertheless, they were doing just the opposite of that.

(Luke 11:47) "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them."

"So, your fathers killed them; you put them in the tomb. So, you guys are working hand in hand because you like dead prophets. You celebrate." When you think about whether it's our forefathers or people in the past that people have celebrated, if you look at many of their quotes, and you were to place them in front of people today, they would reject their quotes, but they would still elevate the person, "Oh, these were great people. We're followers of these people." "Did you see what they said?" "Oh, we're not interested in that." That's the way it is.

You look at Revelation 11, you have the two prophets that are proclaiming in Jerusalem, and they finally get slayed in the middle of the street of Jerusalem, and everybody's celebrating "Dead Prophets Day". I mean, it's a

celebration. People are giving gifts to one another. So, what is that saying? Well, once again, the happiest day of people's lives is the day that the prophets die. And that's one of the statements that He's making within the passage.

Consequently, He says,

(Luke 11:48) "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs.

(Luke 11:49) For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute,

(Luke 11:50) so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation,

Luke 11:51) from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.'"

Jesus is clearly making reference to the fact that prophets have never really been welcomed in the city.

If you look with me in Acts 7, Stephen is placed before the leaders of the church, leaders of Jerusalem at this time. They want him to in some way defend himself. So, he comes before the council and these people are all stirred up, very angry at him, because he's been proclaiming Jesus, which is the truth, right? So, if you're being accused of proclaiming Jesus, don't stop. But Acts 7 goes in the passage, and he begins to make reference to history, and it kind of goes through history. “You know how God called us out and our fathers out, and He gave us promises, and in all these things, God was with us.”

And then if you go all the way down towards verse 35, he brings up Moses. He kind of starts off by working his way through history, and now he's kind of putting the last nail in the coffin, so to speak.

(Acts 7:35) “<u>This Moses whom they disowned</u>...”

So, what he's wanting to show is that prophets have really never been welcomed. Why is that? Because they tell the truth. They're called to tell the truth. They're not called to

be popular, which a lot of pastors today don't understand that. They're not called to blend into the world. That's not what they're called to do. They're called to tell the truth. And sometimes, it's going to look cold and indifferent. I understand that. But the most loving thing that anybody could ever do to you is to tell the truth. You need to do it in love. There's no doubt about that. I'm not saying that you do it hatefully.

But he makes reference to verse 35,

"This Moses whom they disowned, saying, 'WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE? ..."

Once people disagree with you, they go, "Who made you the pastor?" It's a good way to go, isn't it? "Who sent you as the ruler, deliverer to help us?"

And it says in verse 36,

(Acts 7:36) "This man led them out, performing wonders..."

And God really showed Himself strong through him.

(Acts 7:37) “This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, ‘GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.’”

Of course, that's the prophecy of Christ.

(Acts 7:38) “This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.”

In other words, he's giving credentials and he's saying, “This is evidence that God was with him.”

And yet, verse 39, what?

(Acts 7:39) “Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him...”

Well, there's nothing new under the sun. See, it hasn't changed.

“... but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt,

(Acts 7:40) SAYING TO AARON, ‘MAKE FOR US GODS WHO WILL GO BEFORE US...’”

At that time, they made a calf.

And then it says in verse 42,

(Acts 7:42) “But God turned away and delivered them...”

Of course, this is kind of a crescendo as the text goes, and he says in verse 51, “And you’re just like your fathers.”

(Acts 7:51) “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

(Acts 7:52) Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;

(Acts 7:53) you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”

Now, that's very insulting, especially when you're talking to experts of the law. In other words, “You're experts of the law, but you don't obey the law.”

If you've ever read Romans 2, that's basically the whole argument of Romans 2, “You come and you go around criticizing everybody because you know the law, but you don't do it yourself. And because of that, you blaspheme

the name of God." People are so concerned about criticizing everybody else. You say, "Pastor, you criticize people." No, I teach the truth and sometimes it's reprove, rebuke, exhort, yes. But God called me to do that, to preach the truth. Individuals aren't necessarily called to be "junior holy spirits" around the world. But it is the word of God that is convicting. And if you claim and continue to teach the word of God, you are going to offend people. Just a simple statement, "You're going to hell if you don't believe in Jesus." Stand up in the middle of a room and go say that to people. See how receptive they are. They'll just hug you, kiss you, thank you.

But if you look at this, he continues to go down this vein.

(Acts 7:54) "<u>Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.</u>"

And then, of course, they began stoning him. They stoned Stephen. In other words, it obviously wasn't received well.

Have you ever read the Book of Isaiah? It's a great, great book. The Babylonian Talmud tells us that he was sawn in two. That would be a painful death, wouldn't it? It seems to make mention of, in particular in Hebrews 11:37 that

there were some who were sawn in two, and it makes mention, seemingly, of Isaiah the prophet.

According to the Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt as he went to Egypt with those that had rebelled, so that he might call them back, and they stoned him when he went there.

The tombs of the prophets in particular, many of them are on top of the Mount of Olives. Did you know that? They actually have a place in which it actually is kind of a cavern. You go into the cavern, and it fans out, and there are like 50 slots for righteous people, prophets, and whatever. In that particular catacomb, so to speak, there is the prophet of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. And when you look at this particular passage, one of the statements that Jesus makes is that the blood of Abel to Zechariah is there. So, tradition tells us that Zechariah was murdered by a mob because he was teaching the truth. It actually states that. So, Jesus is making mention, “The reason you're angry is because I'm telling you what's true. And that's why you hate Me so much.”

The Bible tells pastors in 2 Timothy 4, to reprove, rebuke, exhort in sound doctrine. We understand that there are going to be times when we're going to be hated and misunderstood. A pastor cannot have another desire other than to point to Christ. But I'm telling you, I see people catering to people. I see people getting angry and people then acquiescing to those people that are getting angry. And it's destructive to the church, and it's destructive to His name. We'll oftentimes take a stand within this particular body. And before long, I hear these little murmurings. Jude says, “You know, you can't nail it.” It's like nailing jello to the wall. So, don't do anything. They’re hidden wreaths in your love feast. But we hear. Nevertheless, they're going to stand before God with that. Because any destruction of the church is not only inappropriate, it angers God. It's a church. And so, God has called us to speak the truth. We're going to be attacked by that.

If you look at Timothy as well as Titus, in fact, turn to Titus first with me. Titus 1. And once again, one of the reasons why the Book of Titus was written, a pastoral epistle, is

because there was basically chaos in Crete, and Paul wanted Titus to set things in order.

If you look with me in verse 10, it reads this way,

(Titus 1:10) “For there are many rebellious men...”

Do you see where that starts off? They're not doing what you tell them to do. They don't think they have to. Maybe it just rubs them the wrong way. Maybe in some way you embarrass them and now they're just angry at you. They don't want to talk to you anymore. But for whatever reason, they're not listening to the truth. Therefore, that's rebellion.

It says,

“For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers...”

Once again, talking about things that aren't important. Have you ever been in a conversation where people are talking about things about the church? “Well, those seats are so uncomfortable.” You know, something that's really not important? I'm going, “Why are you even talking about this?” Focus on the things that have some value to

them, have some meat to them. It's always going to be divisive when you begin to talk about nothing.

"... and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

(Titus 1:11) who must be silenced..."

"I thought the church was so wonderful." Yeah, we're wonderful. But we're wonderful because we love God and we love the truth. And you're not doing anybody a favor by not pointing out things that are hurting other people.

If you look at the passage,

"who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families..."

It's one of the problems with gossiping. Of course, Paul would talk about that in particular. And I don't know if you understand what the word "gossip" means, but it actually comes from the word "demon". So, what it does is stir up people to talk about things that are not productive. You should be talking about people's growth. You should be talking about how you can build up the body. But no, no, no, we're going to talk about things that are not important and destructive to people.

The passage says,

"who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain."

And I would say, not only financial gain, but they do it to boost their own ego. We've had people that have gotten upset with us here. They go to another place where nobody knows them. They don't have any track record. And they go in and have a ministry someplace else. And I'm going, "They shouldn't be there." By virtue of their reputation, their character is tainted. Get the character right. It might be a longer road, but it needs to be right before you go doing these things. Nevertheless, they continue in that way.

"... they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

(Titus 1:12) One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

(Titus 1:13) This testimony is true..."

You would think that Paul would say, “You shouldn't say things like that.” Yeah, but they are lazy, gluttons, destructive. And that's the point.

If you look at 2 Timothy 4:1,

(2 Timothy 4:1) “<u>I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:</u>”

In other words, what Paul does is he places Timothy right in front of God and he goes, “Now, He's the one you got to please.” And once again, it's just amazing to me how people will come up, and they'll say, “I'm offended.” I'm going, “You offended God. This is what I'm concerned about.” Nevertheless, that doesn't even come up in conversation.

It says in verse 2,

(2 Timothy 4:2) “<u>preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort</u>...”

Three, right? Two of them are correction. One is encouragement.

“... <u>with great patience and instruction.</u>

(2 Timothy 4:3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires."

And once again, that's what I see with this church hopping, "I don't like what they told me here. I'll go someplace else." And quite frankly, you have surface churches that say, "Hey, this guy knows a little bit of the Bible. We're going to put him in a position." I'm going, "You have no idea what you're doing." But it's the ignorance of man that does that.

All the way through Scripture, you see him actually warning about foolish speculations. If you look in 2 Timothy 2, see, you're just right in the neighborhood, so I can show you a lot of passages.

But it says in verse 23,

(2 Timothy 2:23) "But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels."

Remember how Jesus was correcting the Pharisees and He goes, "You know, you're worried about the outside,

you did note that God made the inside as well as the outside? And quite frankly, He's more concerned with the inside." You say, "Well, why would that be?" Well, just think about it logistically. If you were going to drink something, would you be as concerned that the glass was dirty inside or outside?

And that's why he'll state in 2 Timothy 2 in this statement, if you look with me,

(2 Timothy 2:19) "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

(2 Timothy 2:20) Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

(2 Timothy 2:21) Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."

In other words, get that inside clean so that you can be used. And that's what needs to happen. And of course,

hypocrisy is only concerned with the external. And so, Jesus begins to hit it head on and He's confronting these obstructionists and it's just important to understand that you never want to get distracted from that which is most important. That's why Paul will ultimately come to the Corinthians and he says, “I came to you knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

If people are talking about other things that are critical and destructive, things that are really superfluous and unnecessary, you'll find arguments and people debating all the time. Romans 14 says, don't go around giving your opinion about stuff. If you have a conviction, hold to it. That's between you and God. But don't tell somebody else that they have to have the same conviction you have. But you do want to preach the truth, and you do not want to compromise on that. So, keep your focus on that. And that's what unites the body; that's what builds the body. There are going to be times in which people are offended. Nevertheless, we will continue to preach. And I'm just so thankful for the transparency of Christ, the clarity of Christ, His message, that it didn't matter that they were

going to crucify Him and nail Him to a cross. He doesn't change the message. And who would think that it was such a destructive message, “God loves you.” “How horrible that is. Let's nail this guy.”

Closing Prayer:

Father, we want to give You thanks for Your lovingkindness to us, for the truth that never changes. We just ask that as we are in this world of ever-changing ideas and thoughts and philosophies, that You would keep us true to You, that we would not major on things that are unnecessary and certainly destructive, doctrines of demons, but that You keep us on target to elevate You, to proclaim You beyond anything else. We point to Your power and Your love and Your sacrifice as You most clearly did while You were on this earth.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. Your focus is very important. What you believe is valuable. Make sure you have your priorities straight. If it takes every day, you need to go back to the beginning of this particular chapter and just literally say, “Your kingdom come. Forgive me my

sins because I have no idea what I'm doing and I'm going to trust in You every single day for everything. I'm not going to depend on myself. I'm not going to go ahead of You. I’m not going to fall behind You. And Lord, I'm going to always be forgiving because that's Your heart. You're a forgiving God. That's what You do. And I'm not going to hold grudges, and I'm not going to hold things. In fact, if somebody sins against me, I'm not going to take into account a wrong suffering. I'm going to let it go because this is Your will.” As you pray that, you'll be back on target. It will unite the body, and you'll see the Lord work in wonderful ways.