

I invite you to open your bibles this morning to today's scripture text which can be found in 1st Timothy, the 1st chapter, verses 1 – 7. This is our second week of a three-week series exposing the most important thing in life we can experience, God's Love; and what that love looks like; this week will be Love, from a good conscience.

1 Ti 1:1-7

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.

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. NIV

when the church loves with intent... The world sees Jesus

We must go to Christ daily, moment by moment, abiding with our Lord Jesus for the Gospel way of Love, the agape love of God, for a pure heart, a good conscience, a sincere faith; for God's work to be produced in our ministries. Our **love for one another; that** is proof to the world of our discipleship with Christ. With Christ living in us, shaping our whole mind, our whole heart according to his image through communion with him. The gospel of John tells us that this Love is commanded from our Lord Jesus (Jn 13:34-35) "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

We must guard ourselves from straying from this truth, relying upon the Law for our salvation. We come to Christ for this, we don't go to the Law for this, we go to Christ for this and we cling to him like a desperate sinner and hold onto Him as He is our **only hope** and **through** that hope what flows into us, a cleansing of the heart, a cleansing of the conscience, a sincere faith. This cleansing is produced by faith Acts 15 says; 8 God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith; making our heart pure, making our conscience clean because Christ declares it, apart from works of the law.

We will make an absolute mess of love if we stray from these 3 things, declared in verse 5, the three things that lead to agape love. Straying from them can destroy churches, and lives, and families, and eternities. We MUST realize the Gospel dynamics of LIFE CHANGE; revealed in today's scripture. We must take heed to this, this is really important. There are hundreds of teachers putting themselves forward in America for how you should handle marriage, child rearing, financial planning, church growth, evangelism, leadership, missions, racial justice; writing books on them, talking on radio, giving speeches... fix your life, fix your marriage, fix YOU!

here's my question: **do they understand 1st timothy 1:5?** How often do we Christians go to these false teachers for MOTIVATIONS, BIG MOTIVATIONS, and we buy these books, and read these things like the bible, and we use them to try to get something going. Do we ask "do they know the Gospel dynamics of how to change people? Do they know what they are talking about when they talk about getting people to act? Do they know?! Do they understand the relationship of a pure heart, a clean conscience and faith unfeigned to allow for sacrificial love in whatever form it takes to bring this change they are talking about? Do *you* even think about this? Do we *ask* that question? So many Christians are riding the wake of secular motivational efforts. We must go DEEPER as Christian's. There is a **right way** to move towards change in peoples' lives and there is a **devastating way!** **Spare us deadly success oh God!** Christ gets no glory from these false teachers. "... They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm." Paul says.

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So, what about a good conscience? Today, we rarely hear any reference to the conscience. Yet throughout church history the best Christian thinkers spoke about the conscience regularly. Thomas Aquinas said the conscience is the God-given inner voice that either accuses or excuses us in terms of what we do. John Calvin spoke of the “divine sense” that God puts into every person, and part of that divine sense *is* the conscience. And when we turn to Scripture, we find that our consciences are a significant aspect of God’s revelation to us. What is this inner voice, or feeling we have, that brings so deeply inside us the conviction of a wrong doing, or the joy of deeds well done? (repeat 2 times) The conscience is a person's inner awareness of conforming to the will of God or departing from it, resulting in either a sense of approval or condemnation.

The term does not appear in the Old Testament but the concept does. David, for example, was smitten in his heart because of his lack of trust, or that is, his lack of faith in the power of God (2 Sa 24:10). 10 David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

But his guilt turned to joy when he sought the Lord's forgiveness and he received Gods blessings (Ps 32). Ps 32:1-5 32 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. *Selah* 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" — and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

In the New Testament, the term conscience is found most frequently in the writings of the apostle Paul. Some people argue erroneously that conscience takes the place of the external law in the Old Testament.

However, the conscience is not the ultimate standard of moral goodness (1 Corinthians 4:4). 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

Under both the old covenant and the new covenant the conscience must be formed by the will of God. The law given to Israel was inscribed on the hearts of believers (Heb 8:10) 10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And in (Heb 10:16) 16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."; so the sensitized conscience is able to discern God's judgment against sin (Ro 2:14-15) 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

The conscience of the believer has been cleansed by the work of Jesus Christ; it no longer accuses and condemns (Heb 9:14) 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! Believers are to work to **maintain** pure consciences to truly experience the agape love of God. They also must be careful not to encourage others to act against their consciences. To act contrary to the urging of one's conscience is wrong, for actions that go against the conscience cannot arise out of faith. (1 Co 8; 10:23-33).

Have you ever heard of “death by 10,000 nicks?” This is where an accuser, inflicts punishment upon his victim, one small cut, a nick at a time. Continually adding cuts to the victim until thousands of wounds finally deliver the end result, death. An unclean conscience, brought on by sin, even the smallest of white lies or untruths, compounding one on top of another, over and over without repentance or the forgiveness of sins through the atoning blood of Christ, remaining unhealed will inevitably result in the same outcome as even the greatest of offenses or sin, death.

The new covenant accomplished what the old could not: removal of sin and cleansing of the conscience (Heb 10:22). *22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

We must go to Christ for our sanctification, not the law, or the vain jangling of secular books, speeches, and media. We must go to Christ for our justification to occur, for genuine life change. Through salvation from Jesus’s gift of love from the cross with His atoning blood. Growing as his disciple, transforming our lives, n developing the ultimate expression of love, true love, the agape love of God; that results from a transformed life *in Christ* that brings about a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

When the Church Loves with intent, the world sees Jesus.

Closing Prayer.

Father, we want so badly, as a congregation, as your church, to know and experience you in our lives each and every moment. To realize the Gospel dynamics of LIFE CHANGE that comes about in our discipleship with you. Transforming our hearts, our minds from communion with Jesus. Create in us a PURE heart, a GOOD conscience, and a sincere faith that comes from your cleansing. Allow all those around us that you put on our life paths, to know your love through us. Because we see that shipwreck can be made of churches, and ministries, and families, and lives, and eternities, when **your love** is absent.

So that we as your church would grow in our understanding of what it means to be good stewards of your grace, of your Love. Guard us from Satan now I pray, may all his fiery darts be quenched in the faith of those who pray in this service. May unbelievers in this service feel welcomed, so welcomed that they are drawn all the way in to faith and salvation and eternal life. Strengthen your church now through your word I pray, and fulfill the law, whose goal is Christ Jesus for righteousness to all who believe and lives of love. Father deliver us from a coldness of heart, a wrongful desire, soften our stony hearts, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us here anew today so that all we do here with your church, and in your mission field will be pleasing and acceptable to you.

In the precious and Holy name of Jesus we pray,

AMEN