

Blueprint for a Healthy Church
Stay True To The Gospel
Guard the Gospel 1 Timothy 1:1-11
January 4, 2026
Pastor Ed Turley

Sermon Notes

Big Idea: A healthy church stays **anchored** in the gospel, guided by **love**, and grounded in **truth**.

How To Stay True To The Gospel:

1. Stay Anchored in the Gospel (vv. 1-2)

This letter is from Paul, an **apostle of Christ Jesus**, appointed by the command of **God our Savior** and **Christ Jesus**, who **gives us hope**. ² I am writing to Timothy, my true son in the faith. May **God the Father** and **Christ Jesus** our **Lord** give you **grace, mercy, and peace**.

1 Timothy 1:1-2 (NLT2)

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of **those who refuse to obey God**. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were **subject to God's anger**, just like everyone else. ⁴ But God is so **rich in mercy**, and **He loved** us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, **He gave us life** when He **raised Christ** from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)
Ephesians 2:1-5 (NLT2)

Notes: _____

2. Stay Anchored to What Matters Most (vv. 3-7)

When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to **stay there** in Ephesus and **stop those** whose teaching is **contrary to the truth**. ⁴ Don't let them waste their time in endless discussion of **myths** and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to **meaningless speculations**, which don't help people **live a life of faith in God**. **1 Timothy 1:3-4 (NLT2)**

Primary issues

- ✓ The authority of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16)
- ✓ The Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
- ✓ The deity and humanity of Jesus Christ
- ✓ Salvation by grace alone through faith alone
- ✓ The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus
- ✓ The sinfulness of humanity and need for redemption
- ✓ Repentance – turning from our sin and turning to God
- ✓ The return of Christ (not the timing—just the certainty)

➔ **If we disagree here, we're not preaching the same gospel.**

Secondary Issues – How we practice our faith - Important, but not saving.

- ✓ Mode of baptism (immersion vs. sprinkling)
- ✓ Church governance (elder-led, congregational, etc.)
- ✓ Spiritual gifts (continuation vs. cessation)
- ✓ Role distinctions in church leadership
- ✓ Worship style preferences

Speculative Issues – What can cause drift - They should never divide us.

- ✓ Pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation views
- ✓ Detailed end-times charts and timelines
- ✓ Political ideologies framed as biblical mandates
- ✓ Bible translation preferences
- ✓ Hypothetical theological questions Scripture doesn't answer

➔ “Healthy churches stay anchored to primary truth, gracious in secondary matters, and cautious with speculation.”

⁵ The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be **filled with love** that comes from a **pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith**. ⁶ But some people have missed this whole point. They have **turned away** from these things and **spend their time in meaningless discussions**. ⁷ They want to be **known as teachers** of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they **speak so confidently**. **1 Timothy 1:6-7 (NLT2)**

3. Stay Anchored in Gospel's Purpose, Not Misusing God's Law (vv. 8-11)

⁸ We know that **the law is good** when used correctly. ⁹ For the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people who are **lawless and rebellious**, who are **ungodly and sinful**, who consider nothing sacred and **defile what is holy**, who **kill** their father or mother or commit **other murders**. ¹⁰ The law is for people who **are sexually immoral**, or who **practice homosexuality**, or are **slave traders, liars, promise breakers**, or who do **anything** else that **contradicts the wholesome teaching** ¹¹ that comes from the **glorious Good News** entrusted to me by our blessed God. **1 Timothy 1:8-11 (NLT2)**

For the **grace of God** has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. ¹² And we are instructed to **turn** from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with **wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God**, ¹³ while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. ¹⁴ He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds. **Titus 2:11-14 (NLT2)**

➔ “If you've been drifting, today is the day to anchor your life in Jesus Christ.”

Next Steps

- [] Sign up for Anchored – Church Center – Events – Anchored - Register
- [] Speak truth in love in one relationship that needs grace.
- [] Ask God to give me a “pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith.”
- [] Accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior



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Talk It Over

Big Idea: A healthy church stays **anchored** in the gospel, guided by **love**, and grounded in **truth**.

Icebreaker

What’s something in your life that fell apart because it wasn’t built on a good foundation — maybe a project, a plan, or even a relationship?

How did you rebuild it differently the next time?

Leader Tip: (Connect this to the idea that what we build our lives on spiritually determines how strong we’ll stand in a storm.)

Read 1 Timothy 1:1–11 (Encourage each person to read a few verses aloud.)

How To Stay True To The Gospel:

1. Stay Anchored in the Gospel (vv. 1-2)

What stands out to you about how Paul introduces himself and describes Jesus as “our hope”?

How does understanding who Jesus is shape how we handle uncertainty or fear?

In what ways can we keep our group or church focused on the gospel rather than personal preferences or opinions?

How can you practically “hold on to Jesus, not just to hope,” in your current season?

2. Stay Anchored to What Matters Most (vv. 3-7)

Why do you think false teaching and endless arguments were such a problem in the early church — and how do we see that today?

Paul says the goal of sound teaching is love. How can truth and love stay balanced in your conversations, especially when others disagree?

What does it look like to “stay in the Word” so you can spot what’s counterfeit?

This week, commit to one way to deepen your grasp of Scripture (join a small group, memorize a verse, or listen to Scripture daily).

3. Stay Anchored in Gospel’s Purpose (vv. 8-11)

Paul says the law is “good when used correctly.” What does that mean for us as believers under grace?

How can we respond with both truth and compassion when culture rejects biblical standards?

Share a time when someone showed you both truth and grace — how did it shape your faith?

Where might God be asking you to speak truth in love — or extend grace without compromise?

“Truth without grace becomes harsh; grace without truth becomes hollow.”

Discuss: Which side do you personally tend to lean toward, and how can you grow in the other?

Group Prayer Focus

Thank God for the gospel that anchors our lives and our church.

Pray that Cornerstone would be a church grounded in truth, guided by love, and growing in grace.

Lift up anyone in the group who needs renewed hope in Jesus, our living Hope.

Next Steps

- [] Sign up for Anchored – Church Center – Events – Anchored - Register
- [] Speak truth in love in one relationship that needs grace.
- [] Ask God to give you “a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.”
- [] Thank God for His grace that anchors you in truth.