12.06.18

# Family Fundamentals – Family Trust

## I Timothy 1:18-20

Please stand for the reading of God's Word.

(I Timothy 1:18) "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,"

(I Timothy 1:19) "keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith."

(I Timothy 1:20) "Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme."

Well, we end this first Chapter in First Timothy with what seems like a sour note; yet it is pulling everything together. It is that picture that I want you to see today. That is to say that God is pulling the family together. I am going to ask you to pull in together with me because there is something that God is asking us to do corporately even as Timothy is being addressed by Paul. It is clear to me that this chapter is about family. I think if a lot of people

read it initially, the perception would not be the same unless you understand the meaning that many of the words convey. One of the words that we looked at in an earlier message was administration. We think of administration as being more like working in management in a corporation or office. But what it literally means is "family building." We know that Paul says in Chapter Three Verse Fifteen that we are a household of faith, a household of faith. He wrote a letter to the church at Ephesus where he talked to them about this household. (See Chapter Two of Ephesians Verse Nineteen.) The fact of the matter is he was pulling them together. He used the word administration in Ephesians Chapter One and Chapter Three. The analogy of the husband and wife is conveyed in Ephesians Chapter Five. Paul explains the responsibility of parents and children in Ephesians Chapter Six. In Chapter Six, we realize that there was a battle that was happening. That is one of the things he talks about in this paragraph in First Timothy Chapter One. There is a battle that a family has. The question is what is the battle that we are fighting and how do we fight it best. As we come to the passage, he conveys that.

As we look at Chapter One as a whole, he starts off by telling us that the family is a place where people get real. We know that because he uses a phrase in Verse Two where he calls Timothy his true son or his true child in the faith. What he was conveying is that home is where real exists. It is where all the masks come off. It is where we begin to be real with one another. That is a wonderful thing, I think, about family. But he was also conveying that the family of God cannot be anything else. It has to be real. It is a place where mercy and peace ultimately reside. In fact, it is what God wants to give all of us. The realization is that none of us really deserve to be a part of this family. In order to be a part of our family, we have to join it. It causes us to value it even more. The more you realize that you do not belong and yet you are accepted is one of those wonderful things that draws you in. “Me, really? You are choosing me?” God says, “Yes, come on in. Before the foundation of the world, I knew you.” It is a wonderful text in Ephesians Chapter One. He pulls us in through mercy, and you begin to find the peace that passes all understanding. The fulfillment of peace often refers to not wanting or needing anything else. You are totally fulfilled.  God gives us a great fulfillment in the household of faith. It is a great gift that God gives us, but

the fundamental principle is that within the home, what exists is real. That means real caring, real loving, real concern for one another. I mean, it is not a facade; we actually do care about your soul.

When he goes on a little bit further, he talks about the house rules in Verses Three through Eleven. He is once again piggybacking on this fundamental truth; that is to say that truth has to reign; it must be an integral part of the family. You cannot teach anything but truth. Deception cannot be a part of anything that you teach. To build a household on truth, you have to teach truth. In the Book of Ephesians, it is reiterated over and over again.

(Ephesians 4:15) <u>“but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,”</u>

(Ephesians 4:25) <u>“Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.”</u>

That is a pretty interesting phrase, isn't it? His point is that you are to be transparent, you are to be real, you are to be genuine with people. You are proclaiming that which is true. The message itself is true, and you are true. As we

looked, not only does he not want us teaching within the household things that are not true, but he wants us to only speak what is truthful. I like the way that Peter puts it,

(II Peter 1:16) <u>“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”</u>

This is real stuff. A true message rings true to a true heart as well as the true spirit who is conveying it. Paul goes on to say that you cannot be hypocritical in the way that you convey the truth. Some people can talk about truth, but it is not real in their life. He says you cannot do that. He says that you do not want people to make confident assertions about things that they do not understand. You want people who actually understand what they are saying. It means something to them. He permeates the letter with the fact that the family must be real. It must be true. You must speak truth. You must have true motives in the things that you do. You cannot twist the Scripture to say something that it is not saying. You have to use it properly.

All of this makes sense to us but unfortunately is often not done well. James says something interesting in

(James 3:14). <u>“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.”</u>

Often bitter jealousy and selfish ambition exist, but that would be lying against the truth. That is an interesting phrase. What he is really saying is, “I thought you said you loved each other. Yet you are jealous of one another.” That is not truth. You are not being truthful. I thought you said you cared for the other person. I thought you said that you cared for them more than yourself. I think you are more concerned about yourself. It is a selfish ambition that seems to be driving you. You are lying against the truth.

(Colossians 3:9) <u>“Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,”</u>

<u>(Colossians 3:10) “and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—”</u>

All the way through, what is being said is that the household is a place where we tell the truth. We are true.

We are genuine. It is one of the reasons why you can be transparent and feel what is it that makes families so accessible, or at least should be, to the people who are in it. They know that mercy reigns. If you knew that mercy reigned, you could talk more freely. Don't you think you could? You know that you will be accepted. It is a place where mercy and peace will be. This is why he starts off that way in the letter. He then goes on to tell us these house rules and really convey the fact that you and I are tied together and united by this truth, by the truth that is within us, by the truth that we proclaim. Fundamentally, that truth is the love of Christ and that He rescued me. Paul gives the interesting example of the fact that he was formerly a blasphemer; even so, God had mercy on him so that he might demonstrate His mercy through him so that people would say, "Well, He had mercy on Paul. He will obviously have mercy on me, too." Paul says,

(I Timothy 1:16) <u>"Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."</u>

God called Paul. But more than that, God saw that when he would come, he would embrace this more than

anything else. Paul then begins to convey that when God speaks to their hearts, He is calling them out to convey this message and that we corporately are being united in this message when we confess that we need mercy. We confessed together corporately that had it not been Christ who saved us, we would have no hope. We believe this. We embrace this. In fact, one thing that he stated:

(I Timothy 1:12) <u>"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,"</u>

Just to reiterate, the Greek word echo is in there which means to hold, to possess, to embrace this wonderful truth of God's loving kindness. The word for loving kindness is *"chairo"* is in there as well. What do you have to be thankful for? We hold, we embrace, this loving kindness given to us. That is where we get the word thank. But the emphasis is that this is what we embrace in this body. We have been loved. It is this mercy and grace and peace that He has given us. It was clearly undeserved, so we hold Him near and dear to us. We live by this. This is what we live by. It pulls us together. This is why Paul says:

(I Corinthians 1:29) “so that no man may boast before God.”

(Romans 3:10) “as it is written, ‘there is none righteous, not even one;’”

He is conveying to us that it is an amazing truth that He saved us, that He rescued us.

(Ephesians 2:8) “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;”

(Ephesians 2:9) “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

The problem with boasting, the problem with arrogance, is that they work against the family. They work against relationships. You have some people who have great prowess in certain things. They begin to stand out. For whatever reason, they begin to brag or boast in their abilities or their strengths. Before long, it begins to segment groups. But the wonderful thing about mercy and grace is that they bring us all together. Nobody can boast about anything. We go, “It is almost like we just come together and hug each other and go, ‘We have been saved!’” We all come together, hug each other and say,

“Isn't that wonderful?  So, what else do you want to talk about?” Well, let's talk about how He saved us. So, you talk about how He saved us. Once you sit in a conversation where somebody starts talking about themselves and how wonderful they are, you see people start yawning. More than that, you see people’s attention start dissipating and moving away from each other mentally.  Emotionally, they move away from each other. What Scripture is telling us is that if we live in a place where love is, there is no room for hypocrisy. There is no room for boasting.

(Romans 12:9) “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

Let's define this. Let love be without a mask. Love has to be without a mask. That is where family is.

(I Timothy 1:5) “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

This is what a household is about. We understand that the mask must come off. What we know of hypocrisy is that if you have a mask, you cannot be real. If you have a mask, you cannot get close to people because the mask is in the

way. It is not you. If you have a mask, you cannot get close. You cannot admit you are wrong. You cannot be truly loving because you cannot be truly anything. You are only concerned about yourself. You are not concerned about the other person. Nothing happens in terms of a close relationship. You cannot really help because you are only concerned about protecting yourself. House, home, is where the masks come off and where you begin to care for one another. You all come together with the same unity in your faith. He saved me.  Paul says that. Brother, that is why we are here. He goes on to say that he was entrusted with this message. As we look at the end of this chapter, we will see that we have been entrusted with this. In other words, this household is entrusted with something. It is very valuable. When you look at it, according to the Book of Ephesians, he refers to entrustment.

(Ephesians 1:4) <u>“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love”</u>

We have been entrusted with God's divine purpose. That is pretty radical if you think about it. He mentions that this had been hidden in ages past, but now it has been

revealed to us. We know the divine purpose of God. What is it? He is building a family. He is building a family that is true. We are not about being an organization. We are not about edifices. We are only about building this purpose of God. He goes on to say in Ephesians Chapter One Verse Twenty-three that God is entrusting us with a fullness that fulfills people. Just imagine that you and I actually have that thing that can actually bring fulfillment into people's lives. Think about that. The suicide rate has gone up exponentially in recent years. What is that telling us? Well, it is obviously telling us that the world is not fulfilling us. Anything that the world has offered is not fulfilling. But we have what will bring fulfillment into people's lives. Scripture says it is like fullness that fills everything. It is like there is not even a corner that needs to be fulfilled. As you look at Ephesians Chapter Three Verse Sixteen, God has given us the riches of His glory. To actually pass on the riches, think of the riches of God's glory. We are able to do it. He has made us stewards of these things. As Ephesians Chapter Three Verses Seventeen through Nineteen say, we possess His true, unfailing, immeasurable love for us. We possess this. It is something that we hold onto. That is why he starts off:

(Ephesians 1:3) <u>“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,”</u>

We have been blessed with things that trump getting a new vacuum cleaner or a plane or something. God has great, wonderful, marvelous things for us. He is stating this at the beginning as Paul turns to his son in the faith, his true son in the faith. He says, “I am handing it to you. I am entrusting this to you.” He uses the word command, if you pick up with me, in First Timothy Chapter One Verse Eighteen. He starts off with this command. Do you see that? Now, this particular word is only used from a superior granting something to a lesser. What he is stating is that by virtue of his calling he is now passing it down to Timothy. Down through the ages, this has been true. Who passed it to him? Well, if you back up into First Timothy Chapter One:

(I Timothy 1:1) <u>“Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,”</u>

An apostle means one sent from God. He was entrusted. In fact, his statement is, if you look with me, that God

literally entrusted him with these things. See Verse Twelve:

(I Timothy 1:12) “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service.”

(I Timothy 1:13) “even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;”

God had entrusted these things to him. The end of Verse Eleven reads this way,

(I Timothy 1:11) “according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.”

Then in Verse Eighteen, therefore, he is now entrusting it to Timothy.

(I Timothy 1:18) “This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,”

He has not stopped expressing this relationship, which is telling us that it is a theme that he is conveying. This is a relationship. This is not an organization. This is something personal. We are building a home. “Timothy, you are my

son. Son, I am going to give something to you. I am giving something to you." When you come together, when we meet together, it is my responsibility to pass something on to you. This church, whether I live or die or go on in a year or two or whatever, God is entrusting to you the very thing that He has entrusted to me. We keep handing it down, and the household itself begins to represent what God is handing down to the world. This household has to convey this truth. You have to embrace this thing that God is entrusting to you. Therefore, he says, "This I command or I entrust to you." Once again, it has the connotation of giving something. I will not break down the whole word, but the word itself emphasizes the fact that he is laying it down; it is an interesting picture because you can almost see the imagery before you. He is looking at Timothy like he is laying it down. He says, "Son, this is yours." He lays it down in such a way that he is conveying that this is the most valuable thing that he could ever give Timothy. What is interesting is that Timothy's name means valued by God. Timothy is the one valued by God by the fact that God would choose Timothy to be a part of this. It is also amazing that Paul would feel valued enough to be entrusted with this. The fact that you and I are entrusted with this is a mark that God has valued us, that we are

valuable. I mean, you do not lay something before someone that is extremely valuable if in fact you do not trust them. Paul says, God counted me trustworthy. He saw in me that I would tenaciously hold onto the responsibility. I have often thought about this in myself. I go, “Okay, I am not talented. I do not have this skill or that ability.” I go down the list of all of the things that I do not have, and I get pretty depressed about myself. But when it finally comes to the end of it, I go, “But You knew that I would hold onto this, didn't you? You knew that I would not let go of this. You knew that I would present this, that I would protect this, that I would guard this in my life, that I would not let it change, that I would not let it shift, that I would make it true. You knew that, didn't you?” God goes, “Yes, that is why I chose you.” I believe that is why God chose us. I cannot imagine that you would come to this church without wanting to get real. I just cannot conceive it in my wildest imagination. I am going, “Why are you here?” I know it is not entertaining.” We can go down the list of things that might draw people, but the only reason you would be here is because you want to be true. It is as though God has called us together. It is as though we gather together to protect this thing. Go back to Chapter Three Verse Fifteen.

(I Timothy 3:15) <u>“but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”</u>

We are the pillar. We are the support of the truth. That is what we do. Then Paul turns to Timothy and says, “Timothy, I love you. You are valued by me, but you have been valued by God because He has chosen you for the same purpose. So here it is. I am handing this over to you.” Verse Eighteen goes on to say that it was in accordance with the prophecies. It is interesting the way he words this: “…in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you…” Paul actually records those prophecies. If you look with me in First Timothy Chapter Four, we will pick up in Verse Thirteen.

(I Timothy 4:13) <u>“Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.”</u>

(I Timothy 4:14) <u>“Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.”</u>

There is that prophecy. The best way that I can describe prophetic would be that literally God is talking. God is

speaking to you. God declares. God declares through the body of elders. Presbytery is the word for elders, by the way. God reveals through a unifying body of elders. God begins to speak to them and says, “This guy right here, choose this guy.” They pull him aside and go, “You are with us. Choose this guy. You are with us.” God is doing that same thing when He calls you to salvation, when He calls you to come. He is selective. It is a wonderful thing. His statement in this is that you cannot neglect the spiritual gift because it was conveyed by all those around you. God did this. The irony of God giving this to Timothy, of course, is that we know that he had a kind of timidity about him. Paul sent this guy to Ephesus where you have all these philosophers. There were Gnostics. There were agnostics. You have all of the mysticism that he is going to have to deal with on top of Judaism. He was not even old enough, really, to deem respect. The passage says in Verse Twelve,

(I Timothy 4:12) <u>“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.”</u>

Obviously, some were looking down on him. The point is that he was not feeling up to the game, not any more than Jeremiah was. But God says, “No, I want that guy.” Paul tells him, “God recognized something in you, Timothy, just like he recognized something in me. I am trusting you.” God recognized it in him. Why would God tell him this? Why him? God goes, “Because I can trust you to get this message across.” You see, we are not just coming together to sing songs and to play church. We are actually here to protect something. God has given us something really valuable. He is handing it to us. He says, “Okay, you have to take care of this. Make sure that it is protected because if you do not, truth is going to get lost.”

The passage reads that way, and it is an interesting phrase. He is to fight the good fight. He will repeat this at the end of his life in Second Timothy Chapter Four. Fight the good fight. Good is a word that is used. Notice that within two verses he is going to use the word good twice. One will be from one word, and the other will be another word. He will first use “*kalos*,” and the second time he uses “*agathos*.” The difference is what? At the very beginning where he says fight the good fight, he used the term “*kalos*.” The emphasis of that particular word is

probably in the root where it refers to better. But more specifically, what he is conveying is something better suited for something. So, the best way that I can describe the word good here is that he is talking about intrinsic good. I do not want to get into the depth of that. But what seems to be emphasized in this is that this fight that he was enlisting him in is best adapted for the goal we have. It is the best weapon. That is why he defines it as good. When he says that it is good, what he means is that it is adapted to accomplish what we want to accomplish. The question you have to ask yourself is, "What is it that we set out to accomplish?" According to Chapter One Verse Five, what is the goal?

(I Timothy 1:5) <u>"But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."</u>

All of those are saying what? Real. Genuine. What he is saying is that this battle that you and I are in is a battle for love. Love is to be displayed in a real and genuine and sincere way that is based solely on our faith in Christ. In other words, it is because of Christ's love.

(I John 4:10) <u>“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”</u>

There is something that changes when we receive the love of God that puts us immediately into the realm of what is real. What he was saying is, “Now we are going to have resistance because the world and everybody else in it is trying to tell you that there is another kind of love. There is another kind of way of thinking. In fact, you can have church; but you do not have to be real with people. Come to church and put on the mask. That is okay. He says, “We are going to have resistance.” This is why you read about the Pharisees in particular. Everything seems to be okay with them and with each other as far as the fact that they were not being afflicted by one another. They did not like each other, but they were not being afflicted by one another because nobody really cared about anybody else. Therefore, the world was satisfied. But you are going to have persecution because you are being real. Why was Jesus crucified? It makes absolutely no sense. But everything that Jesus did was about as genuine as you could be. He was an indictment against all those who were wearing a mask. All the way through we

see God calling us to this. He says, “Now you have to fight in such a way that it fulfills the goal that you and I have been called to do.” There are a lot of things that are going to take us off-track. There are a lot of things that are going to move us away from what this is all about, but you and I should be constantly fighting to stay on track. Sometimes you need to sit down with your family members and say, “Okay, let's just talk about this instead of everybody just pretending like it is gone.” But you are the defender of what is right. You must do it in a way that is transparent and sincere; otherwise, you have misrepresented the truth. You must have a genuine love for a person. You actually have to love each other from the heart. I know it is a bummer for some of us, but you actually have to like me. You have to be genuine about it. You cannot get away with just flattery. We are fighting this all the time. The battle is not to me to be filling the pews. The battle to me is having people sit in here who are real. They are really demonstrating that truth to one another. We keep bringing you back to that wonderful place because I have been entrusted with that. I have not been entrusted with fake. I have been entrusted with real. In accordance with the prophecies previously made, Timothy was called out,

called by God to present this wonderful message that is the good thing, the thing equipped to fulfill the goal.

He goes on to say in Verse Nineteen that we are to keep the faith. Now once again, this is part of the good. This is part of the good fight. Keeping the faith. Here again, he uses the same word that was used in Verse Twelve meaning holding onto tenaciously, embracing. It gives a picture of his not letting go of this. What it is saying is that he is not letting go of his total trust in Christ Jesus. "I know it was solely Him. I know it was solely Him. He saved me." You are not letting go of that. It is as though this is what draws us together. If we start bragging about what we have accomplished with one another, it is going to tear us apart. On the other hand, if we come together saying, "It is only Him, isn't it?" "Amen, brother. It is only Him. I am not letting go of this; are you? I am not letting go of it. I have no hope without Him." Now the next phrase is "*agathos"* which means with a good conscience. The good that "*agathos"* means in this passage emphasizes more of the deeds or the mindset of what you are trying to accomplish. What it indicates is that you are always seeking. You have a mindset, or you have a conscience. Your mindset is, "I will seek only the best for the other

people.” That is a benevolent, altruistic, selfless mindset. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, right? He did not think of Himself but thought of others first and held others in higher esteem than Himself. Okay, what he is saying is that you have to hold not only to your faith but also to what your faith represents. Think like Christ did when He died for you. You are only going to do this if it is best for this person.

In other words, when you come together, you do not have the motive of trying to get something out of somebody. You only think, how can I help somebody become more like Christ? That is the best form, right? That is always the best form. You are always thinking, “What can I do to help build them up?” Sometimes it is encouragement. Sometimes it is reproof of a rebuke. Whichever, the goal is always to help them. Their response may be, “Well, I do not want to talk to you anymore.” “But Brother, I would be glad to talk to you anytime. Even so, I am still going to tell you the truth because I care too much for you to not tell you what is right.” Because that is your heart, your goal is to say what is the best for them. He says we are holding onto the faith that literally has pulled us all together. We all have the same intentions for one another, and they are

the best. Deep down inside of our heart, every decision we make is what is good for those around us. With every single decision, we want what is best. It is the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. Unfortunately, as He approached the end of His life, some had rejected His mindset. They had suffered “shipwreck regarding their faith.” The emphasis of this phrase is that some have stepped away from it being God who did it. Their trust has not been in Him. They then begin to take a position of exalting themselves. We know that has been a problem all the way through the Scriptures.

There was the competitiveness of Third John Verse Nine with Diotrephes who always wanted to be first. Or you might read in James Chapter Three Verse Fourteen about selfish ambition. In Second Peter Chapter Two, out of avarice or greed people were trying to proclaim the message. In reality, they were trying to exploit people in the process. Sardis is an interesting study to me in Revelation where it talks about their making a name for themselves. I think a lot of people get into Christian work to get a name for themselves. But Paul fundamentally says, “You know what? It is about me receiving mercy and you receiving mercy. It is about me loving you, and I want

the best for you. We must have a heart for one another. There are people that come in who do not feel that way. Paul says, “You have to get them out.” It parallels the passage in First Corinthians Chapter Five, doesn't it?

(I Corinthians 5:6) “Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?”

That attitude, that heart, begins to tear people apart. People are no longer thinking about what is best for other people. Their selfish ambition and lustful desires are causing them to aim for whatever they want for themselves. They use everybody around them. “You must get them out,” he says to them in this passage. The interesting analogy that he gives us in this text uses the word shipwrecked. You see that? The metaphor imagery that he presents before us is that of a shipwreck. When I first read that, I thought, “Okay, where did you get shipwreck from?” He could have used the example of a shepherd when the sheep fall off a cliff or something. But he wanted to use shipwreck. The better you understand his wording, the better suited it becomes. The word that he uses for ship in the text is a very, very large ship. He

could have used a fisherman's type of boat or any one of other different words that can be used. However, he used the word for a large cargo ship. It actually is a large ship, which is telling me something about these guys. He gives their names—Hymenaeus and Alexander. They obviously were part of the body. I think what he wanted to convey, and I do not think I am stretching this, is that here you had two men who had much to offer the body. They came with immense things. It may have been gifts; it may have been talent; it may have been a lot of knowledge. Whatever it was, they came with a lot of stuff that they could benefit the church with. Yet if someone does not have faith, if their trust is not in God, how destructive they can become to the body. I have often seen people walk in our doors who have a lot to offer. Look at that talent. Look at that money. They have a lot to offer. God says, "Is all their trust in me?" "Well, no." "Get them out. They cannot be a part of the family." They are going to see themselves as the hope. They are going to see themselves as the ones who will be given the benefits. They will take all of the focus and put it on themselves, like Diotrephes in Third John. You must get them out because the only thing that holds this family together is our faith in Christ. You must help me protect this. You have to help me build

the name of Christ. We all need to say, like John the Baptist,

(John 3:30) “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

I was talking to Josh before the service about that wonderful Psalm,

(Psalm 115:1) “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of Your loving kindness, because of Your truth.”

There is nothing that will unite our hearts more than all of us saying that in unison while believing it. There is nothing that will draw us together more than always thinking about each other more than ourselves. I mean, that is fundamentally the principle of Philippians Chapter Two, isn't it?

(Philippians 2:5) “Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus,”

(Philippians 2:6) “who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,”

(Philippians 2:7) “but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men.”

(Philippians 2:8) “being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

(Philippians 2:9) “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,”

Paul will go on in Philippians to convey just how this unites the hearts of the body. It is the same theme that he writes about to the church at Ephesus. Of course, Ephesus is the church that Timothy was pastoring. If you look with me in Ephesians, let me just read a couple of the verses which refer to that. It is a great text. If you look with me in, once again, at a familiar text, but let's just read it together. Paul writes this in Verse Eighteen of Chapter One.

(Ephesians 1:18) “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”

(Ephesians 1:19) “and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might”

(Ephesians 1:20) “which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,”

(Ephesians 1:21) “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”

(Ephesians 1:22) “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,”

Wow! Do you understand Verse Twenty-two? He will go on to explain that God has so ordained the church to not only be the sole steward of these marvelous things, but we will also be the ones who are the benefactors in the giving of this thing. We have to get this straight. We are the keepers of the truth. If we skew it, the world is not going to be clear about this.

(Ephesians 3:14) “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,”

(Ephesians 3:15) “from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,”

(Ephesians 3:16) “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,”

(Ephesians 3:17) “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,”

Now, let me say this. It is impossible for you to be rooted and grounded in love without faith. Therefore, that is what we hold onto—the love of God for us. We believe that.

(Ephesians 3:18) “may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,”

(Ephesians 3:19) “and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

Think about this. You and I can actually hand something to others. We have an entrustment. We can hand it over to them. Do you know how much God loves you? We have to make that clear. If we come across as not loving them, it is going to be a pretty unclear message. It is going to be twisted and distorted. We have a stewardship that God

has given us. Paul is turning to Timothy and says, “You cannot be shipwrecked in this faith.” It does not matter what you have. It does not matter what you come to the table with. It does not matter. You have to hold onto your faith. You have to want what Christ wanted which is the best for everyone. God is not willing that any should perish. You need to want the best for everybody with whom you come into contact. Will you hold on to this? Will you, will we as a church, take this stewardship and say, “Okay, we are not messing this up.” That is what God is asking us to do.

**Prayer**

Father, we come before You today, and it is our desire to be a family. We do not want to be a family like the world defines it because they do not know what genuine love is. We have come into a family where love has been personified. We have held and perceived the love of Christ among us, as John would say. It is real. It is real. Everything about our family is real. Real began with Jesus. There is no mistake in our hearts or our minds. We know He is the truth. It is because of this that love has been poured out within our hearts. It has caused us to love the

way He loves without hypocrisy. We come to realize that this is an entrustment. This real love thing is like an entrustment that You have called upon us to guard, to protect. We take this mantle today as Timothy did many years ago. You are handing to us the most valuable stewardship ever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, join the family. Join the family. Stop thinking about everything you have on the ship. Start thinking about what you need to embrace, what you need to hold onto. Yes, you will be in a battle. But here is the deal. You have to fight in such a way that you fulfill the goal. The goal of our instruction is love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. I guess you are going to have to follow Jesus on this one because the world has no blueprint for this. But if you will hold onto this and embrace the stewardship that is given to you, God will build a church that will touch lives.