

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

How to Handle False Teaching

Speaker:

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Scriptures:

2 Timothy 2:14-19

Theme: Avoid irreverent babble because God's firm foundation stands.

Introduction: Words matter. We may say that actions speak louder than words, or that a picture is worth a thousand words. But we also know that words and speech are powerful things. Words sway hearts and minds. In this passage, Paul instructs Timothy about what to do with the words of false teachers. False teaching is common in the history of the church, it is very destructive, and Paul is equipping Timothy—and us—with how to deal with it.

Paul gives us 3 aspects to understand and respond to false teaching:

1. Irreverent babble

Babble is 'nothing' speech—it is empty and pointless. But Paul adds the word "irreverent" to help us understand that this is also godless. It does not fear him. Paul also makes clear that we cannot avoid conflict over these things. There's no middle ground, or way to avoid conflict with these false teachers. He called out Hymenaeus and Philetus because they were denying the bodily resurrection, and in that way were undermining the gospel. The proper response to such teachings is to reject and oppose it.

2. How to avoid

Paul charges Timothy to "present himself" as a faithful workman by studying and knowing God's word and applying it well to life. That would also equip Timothy to identify and oppose false teachings, for the good of God's people. All of us should study God's word, in part to discern truth from error.

3. Why to avoid

Irreverent babble may appear harmless, but Paul takes a hostile attitude and calls us to do the same. He rightly sees how dangerous and destructive it is. At best, it's a waste of time. But more often, it ruins the hearers, leads people into ungodliness and spreads like gangrene, ultimately upsetting the faith of some. In contrast, God's firm foundation stands. Harkening to Korah's rebellion (Num 16), Paul reminds us that "the Lord knows those who are his," and that his people will "depart from iniquity." We must always honor the Lord and what he says is righteous, without fail.

Questions:

1. What "irreverent babble" are you exposed to every day?
2. Does the fear of the Lord bring you into conflict with others?
3. How do you respond to conflict?