

1Tim 4:1-5 – THE PREDICTION OF THE DECLINE OF THE CHURCH

I. The Spirit's Speaking (v.1)

- A. The Spirit says expressly
 - 1. This is the Spirit who dwells in our spirit and speaks to us there (Rom. 8:9-11, 16)
 - a. This is contrary to "Thus saith the Lord"
 - 2. We need to exercise our spirit that it may become keen and clear to listen to the Spirit's speaking and be kept from the deceiving spirits and teachings of demons

II. Departing from the Faith (v.1-3)

- A. The Spirit predicts the decline of the church (v.1)
 - 1. The later times, or after times, refer to after the writing of this book
 - a. This differs from "*in the last days*", which denote the closing period of this age (2 Tim 3:1)
 - 2. Paul realized that in time to come some would depart from the faith
 - a. The faith here is objective and refers to the contents of our belief
 - b. On one hand, Paul was bold and encouraged, believing that the church is the house of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
 - c. On the other hand, he knew that certain so-called believers would depart from the faith.
- B. Giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons (v.1)
 - 1. According to the bible, there are two categories of evil spirits
 - a. The deceiving spirits are the fallen angels (Matt. 25:41; Eph 6:12)
 - b. The demons are the pre-adamic creatures who were judged by God (vv?)
 - c. Among Christians today, there are deceptive doctrine which come from deceiving spirits in the air and also teachings which originate with demons
- C. In the hypocrisy of men who speak lies (v.2)
 - 1. This phrase modifies "teaching of demons" in verse 1
 - 2. The teachings of demons are carried out in the hypocrisy of those who lie
- D. Branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron (v.2)
 - 1. The conscience of hypocritical liars has lost its sense as if seared with a hot branding iron
 - 2. The branded consciences of hypocritical liars are the result of being shipwrecked regarding the faith (1 Timothy 1:19)
 - 3. To keep a good and pure conscience is to keep the conscience sensitive in its function
 - a. This will safeguard us from the demonic and hypocritical teachings of deceiving liars
- E. Marriage and eating being ordained by God (v.3)

1. Marriage was ordained by God for the carrying out of God's purpose with man
2. Food is necessary to sustain mankind to exist on earth for the fulfillment of God's purpose
3. Satan seeks to destroy these things, either causing people to abuse them through:
 - a. Indulgence of the lustful flesh
 - b. Unbalanced in the way of asceticism

III. The Truth concerning food (v.4-5)

- A. Receiving food with thanksgiving (v.4)
 1. Because all food is God's gift to us, we should receive it with thanksgiving
 - a. Not merely a ritual of saying a so-called word of grace
 - b. Nor neglecting to thank the Lord for the food He has given us
- B. Those who believe and have full knowledge of the truth (v.4)
 1. To believe is to be saved and thus begin in the spiritual life
 2. To have fully known the truth is to realize God's purpose in His economy and to grow unto maturity in the spiritual life (1 Tim 2:4)
 - a. The truth here is God's economy concerning Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ
- C. Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected (v.4)
 1. This statement is contrary both to Gnosticism, and to ascetic teachings
 - a. Gnosticism teaches that some created things are evil
 - b. Ascetic teachings command men to abstain from certain foods
 2. Paul's instructions on how to take care of local church
- D. For it is sanctified through the word of God and intercession (v.5)
 1. All the food we eat can be sanctified, separated unto God for His purpose through the word of God and intercession
 - a. Need to intercede for our food and ask the Lord to sanctify it
 2. This is the proper way to receive our God given food with thanksgiving