

**Series: Incommunicable Attributes of God #1680**

**Title: 1 Timothy 6.2-3**

***Doctrine Conforming to Godliness***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. I trust you are well. And I remind you that we are talking about how theoretical and practical it is to talk about who God is. We must always start with the theory and then move to the practice. We first address the mind and then we address the mouth, eyes, hands, and feet. To think about the being of God, to contemplate Him in all His fullness and greatness, this is our joy and is extraordinarily necessary for us as His people. Do you ever just sometimes sit and reflect on the nature and character of the Living God? Do you read about Him in your Bible and in books and articles and blog posts and the like from trustworthy sources and do you do this as an end in itself? You do not have an agenda to get something of pragmatic use out of it. You're just reflecting on God to reflect on God?

Let me say that I hope you do that. More and more in my life I am learning how to do this. Since the majority of my time is spent studying so that I can teach, I have to set firm boundaries in place to make certain that I do not miss out on contemplating God with no other purpose than to contemplate God! I am not suggesting we all become hermits, ascetics, and recluses in which we bundle up our Bible and our books and head deep into the mountains to take up resident in a log cabin for weeks on end so we can just sit and think. *Although...* boy that's tempting! But no. We all live in the world and we have jobs and travel and kids and families and church and commitments to other people. And yet, amidst our busyness there is still that necessity to ponder the wonder of the Living God! So, however you do it, I hope you behold the Lord!

Thus far we have learned that the theology (what we believe about God) goes together with practice (how we live for God based on what we believe about God). The 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch theologian Petrus van Mastricht has been helping us with this. His text is our text: 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 2 and 3. And in verse 2 Paul writes to Timothy and says, "**Teach and preach these principles.**" That is, teach and preach the full council of God, teach and preach all of the good, right, and true theology I have passed along to you, Timothy. First, teach. Second, preach. Van Mastricht says the teaching is the theory and the preaching is the practice or the practical.

Teaching will inform the intellect. Preaching will move the will. When you hear preaching does it move you? Does it exhort you and urge you towards doing something in obedience to the Word of God in your life? I can tell you that when I preach I am most certainly *urging*. Often I am *pleading* with my listeners to be changed by what we hear from the Scripture. I know not all preachers are like this, and that's good. I often wish I could be different, but I preach with my whole being. This is why on Sunday afternoons I am exhausted. I can literally *feel* my body ache. I need to lie down and rest, even for just an hour or two. You might even sometimes sense this listening to me on *God Is*. Having learned who God is, having understood Him intellectually, what preaching then does is to move us to implement what we have learned in practical, pragmatic ways.

I do not think this means the preacher must always give us a list of specific ways to *do* what the Bible says to do. I am not a fan of "here are three ways to apply this." Why not? Because I trust the Holy Spirit to apply the Bible to the life. Furthermore, I am speaking to a broad audience of people. How a teenager will apply the Scripture passage will be different from how a fifty year old parent will or an eighty year old grandmother will, etcetera. So the exhortation is there, the urging is there, the pleading is there, the spurring people on, the waking people up is there – all to summon positive change in the life of the believer and *unbelievers* who may be listening.

One more important point about teaching and preaching. Catch this. We are all totally *dependent on the Holy Spirit* to transform us. Listen to Jesus in John 14, verses 16 and 17, "**I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; <sup>17</sup> that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.**" And then down to verse 26, "**The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**" (John chapter 14.)

Yes. Oh yes. The Spirit of God is the one who moves us all to action. If the Holy Spirit does not approve of, bless and anoint a sermon, a teaching, a broadcast, a podcast, a talk then it's dead on arrival. It might as well not have been prepared and given (said). We desperately need the Holy Spirit to teach us all things. Amen, I hope you are saying!

Let's return to the 1 Timothy 6 text. Verse 2 ends, "Teach and preach these *principles*." Then, verse 3 says, **"If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness..."** On this verse and the ones that follow Van Mastricht offers us three insights well worth exploring. The first insight is this: Paul commands Timothy to distinguish between false doctrine and true doctrine, between false teaching and true teaching. And this first insight has four sub-points. A) "False doctrine teaches something erroneous, that is it teaches something different or in a different manner than what Paul in fact personally taught along with the other apostles. That is, false doctrine is whatever is contrary to the apostles and the prophets (*Theoretical-Practical Theology*, Kindle 46%)."

Listen to Paul over in Ephesians where he writes about the nature of His teaching and preaching. This is Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 20. **"Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone..."** False doctrine and false teaching is the opposite of that. B) True doctrine or teaching does not remain in the things the false teachers teach. The truth changes. It is added to or subtracted from. Listen to God in Deuteronomy 12, verse 32,

**"Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it."** And listen to Revelation 22, verses 18 and 19, **"I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book."** Therein are the crystal clear warnings from God to not add to or subtract from His truth, and yet as we know very well today, false teachers do this all the time.

C) Van Mastricht says, "[False teaching] fails to teach the sound words of Christ or about Christ. This occurs when it simply does not teach Christ, or if it does teach Christ, when it does not do so soundly, whether concerning His person, His offices, or His benefits (Kindle 46%)." End quote. This is true. Think of some false teachers today for whom Christ is never mentioned. Or take for example the cult of Mormonism. The Mormons (the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), they are big on teaching Christ, but He is not the Christ of the Bible. Their Christ is not God's Christ. He is a fake, a fraud, an imposter, a phoney. Do not be fooled, friends, Mormons are not Christians.

D) False teachers do not deliver a doctrine that is "conforming to godliness," as verse 3 of 1 Timothy 6 says. Friends, teaching and preaching that is not firmly rooted in Scripture will always lead to godlessness. There will be no holiness, no evidence of sanctification, of living for Christ. Instead of being godly, false teachers are always known by their sin. And we see this today all over the place. Sin runs rampant among the heretics. Financial crimes, sexual deviance, adultery, abuse, and lying just to name a few.

Van Mastricht points to Romans 6, verse 11, which says, **"Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."** And he says, "Christian theology is best defined as the doctrine of living for God through Christ (Kindle 46%)." Oh! I love this, so let me repeat it. "Christian theology is best defined as the doctrine of living for God through Christ."

So, we have our A, B, C, and D. Next time I will remind you of these and we will add insights two and three. Please plan to be with us as we continue to discover who God Is!

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