- ***READ II Timothy 4:1-5*** As Timothy continued on in his ministry of preaching the Gospel and teaching the way of the Lord, Paul warns him that more and more people would arise who wouldn't want to hear the truth, but instead they would be more interested in listening to myths and having their ears tickled. It shouldn't shock us when Paul states that people wouldn't take too kindly to being told that they are sinful and in need of a savior. They wouldn't want to hear that they are in need of change so that they can avoid the consequence of their wicked ways. Instead of hearing the truth, they would rather be approved in their sin by swallowing a bunch of lies. In reality, has anything changed today?

- The truth is that things haven't really changed all that much over the past 2,000 years. In fact, we live in a world where this type of approach to truth doesn't apply to only the religious realm, but we live in a culture where all areas of life are ruled by this concept of political correctness. We live culture where political correctness is quite possibly the greatest badge of honor that one can possess. To be politically correct according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary is to *"conform to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated."* While the term specifies activities in the political realm, let's be clear that political correctness touches every part of our lives. It's not just that we should eliminate words or actions that might offend someone's political sensibilities, but we are flat out not suppose to say or do anything that might cause anyone to be offended about anything. No greater sin can be committed in our culture than to offend someone else.

- Now, this seems to cause a problem for us because in Paul's instructions to Timothy, he says that Timothy needs to stand strong to make sure that he reproves, rebukes, and exhorts with great patience and instruction. To so many, these words written by Paul are highly politically incorrect because it is not good to reprove, rebuke, or exhort anyone…because we don't want to offend anyone right? So what is the disciple to do? There are many who have recognized the grave danger and problem that political correctness has put in front of God's people. Dave Miller of Apologetics Press said this. *"The adverse impact of "political correctness" on American culture cannot be overstated. Its sinister influence has been monumental and subversive in the extent to which it has reshaped American values, literally driving the population farther away from its Christian moorings, and redirecting civilization toward hedonism, socialism, atheism, humanism, and a host of other anti-christian philosophies."*

- Each Christian is charged with being dedicated to upholding the truth and reality of this world, sin, and the need for repentance and salvation. We are to be a people who are willing to speak the truth no matter the circumstance and tell others exactly what they need to hear for their soul's sake. It is our duty to call that which God calls sin sin. It is our duty to stand against the evils of our day. We are to speak against the evil of abortion, same-sex unions, racism, sexism, and the like, but what are we to do when in doing so we become politically incorrect? How did we even get to a place where speaking the truth is not just frowned upon but seen as the greatest of sins? Let's take some time this morning to consider how we got to this place in our society, and then tonight we will consider how we can overcome as disciples of Jesus.

Contributing factors and results of this politically correct culture.

A. Rejection of truth.
   1. With the rise of humanism has come the notion that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Humanism propagates the idea that there is no being higher than human, and if this is the case then all people are equal in value, and thus no one person's ideas are better than another's. What I think is true is true to me, and the same is true for you and each person individually. This is all done in an effort to rid society of any power that a person might have to say that another is doing something that is wrong. To be told that something I am doing is wrong is hurtful and I might be offended. Political correctness shows me that nothing could be worse.
   2. With this system of thought gaining more and more traction, it shouldn't surprise us that any claim of sin or wrong doing on the part of another is met with staunch resistance since each is governed by their own subjective thoughts and reasonings. Matters such as same-sex unions, abortion, gender identity, and even religious matters are muddied and ruined when there is no such thing as truth. Political correctness is born and thrives in such an environment where truth cannot be put forth as truth. But this isn't the first time a society has rejected truth for a lie. **(Romans 1:18-25)**

B. Love means acceptance.
   1. To many in our society, the only thing that matters is love for one another (Sounds familiar doesn't it? Almost like I've read that somewhere before…). I agree with the sentiment…but I have some questions that I think need to be answered. Firstly, I must ask who it was that established this as being the only thing that truly matters since there is no absolute truth. Secondly, what is meant by love? To many, love means acceptance and allowance of anything that anyone else might do.
   2. Of course, the main arena in which we have seen this type of thinking the strongest is in the discussion of same-sex marriage. The pro-LGBTQ crowd would argue vehemently that not only is it politically incorrect to speak against same-sex marriage, but if one wants to do the "right" thing that they must approve and endorse this action in others. Any efforts to do anything else is political incorrectness of the highest order.
C. Opposition is hatred.
   1. Hand in hand with this idea that love is acceptance is the other side of the coin where any sort of opposition is considered as hatred. If I oppose the concept of same-sex unions then I am automatically branded a bigot and I hate all people who might fall into the LGBTQ grouping.
   2. If I don't think that love is love then I must hate those who I oppose as being "married. It doesn't matter if I compassionate, caring, or if I never raise my hand in violence…the simply action or non approval is enough to show others that I am full of hatred within my heart. Our politically correct culture would love to show this as being so, but God teaches us through His word that true love is doing what is best for others. That sometimes means that correction and discipline is necessary. **(Hebrews 12:3-11)**
D. Faithful bullied into silence.
   1. So when this type of environment because prevalent, those who are faithful to God's standard of moral excellence and purity are shunned and silenced by those who would see them as being politically incorrect. If we're wanting to called it like it is, we are forced to say that the faithful are bullied into silence.
   2. In no other place is this seen more clearly than in those situations where privately owned businesses are attacked for not being willing to participate in things that go against their moral code. Flower shops, bakeries, and other such businesses have been under a wave of turmoil because they would not support homosexual weddings with their business. To many in our society, that is seen as hatred because they oppose and don't accept joining of man and man or woman and woman. Politically correctness is literally ruining lives. But this isn't the first time we have seen the truth threatened into silence. The Apostles and the earliest Christians dealt with such opposition. **(Acts 17:1-9; 5:27-40)** Yet, they were strong enough to recognize the necessity of obeying God rather than men, because obedience to God is the only way to avoid the disastrous consequences of man's foolish wisdom.
E. Result: Moral & Societal Decay
   1. Where does all of this get us? It gets us to exactly where we are today in this politically correct culture where the very moral fabric of our society is broken and decaying. Nearly gone are the days where truth and morality are lauded as being worthy of praise and exultation.
   2. In our culture, one of the worst places we could find ourselves in is in the seat of one who has stood up against that which we belief to be wicked or evil. In doing so, we have declared that there is a standard of moral excellence, and to fail to reach so will only lead to disastrous consequences. Our genuine love for the souls of others will fall upon deaf ears. Too many would rather have their ears tickled or pursue their foolish and flawed desires, than to heed to words of wisdom and warning that when they sow the wind, they will reap the whirlwind.

When we look around at the toxic environment in which we often find ourselves in where speaking the truth can cause us to be labeled a bigot or a hateful person, we wonder how in the world we could've gotten to such a horrible place, but I think we can all see how such a thing can happen. Yet, regardless of the difficulties we might face, I hope that each of us will stand like the Apostles and early Christians did as they rejoiced in the fact that they were worthy to suffer for Jesus's name. May God help us to have such an attitude as we stand strong against Satan and all of his wicked schemes. ***PRAYER***