

The Letters to Timothy

The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the Pastoral Letters. They are the only letters in the New Testament to those who were serving under Paul's Apostleship. These letters focus on three chief concerns upon Paul's heart: false teaching, directions for a definite church polity, and adherence to the traditional doctrines of the Church.

We can tell from clues in the letters and the book of Acts that 1 Timothy and Titus were written between Paul's first and second imprisonments. 2 Timothy was written during the second imprisonment and just before his death about 68 A.D. We have problems similar to those Timothy faced in today's churches. False teachings, ignorance of the basic beliefs of the Church, and problems with organizing the local church began shortly before Paul's death but they have plagued the Church ever since.

1 Timothy 1

Verse one: Ephesians 1:11 says that Paul was an Apostle by the will of God. 1 Cor 1:1 says he was called to be an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. But here we find it is also the command of God. It is as if Paul had little to do with it. God commanded him to be an Apostle. We might ask ourselves what we are commanded to be as opposed to what the will of God is for us. What is the specific call of God upon your life? Do you remember from our study of Church Government that an Apostle was a very unique title and only for 12 men? It is upon the teaching of the Apostles that the Church is built and similarly their names are on the foundation of New Jerusalem. What a command! Obviously God knew what He was doing and much of our New Testament is from his words. The command came from God our Savior. We always think of Christ Jesus as Savior but the One who gave the Son is also the Savior. The command also came by Christ Jesus – our hope. In earlier epistles we see Paul refer to the Lord in several ways, Lord, Jesus, Christ, Jesus Christ, but in these epistles we will find the name is most often expressed as Christ Jesus, meaning the Anointed Salvation of Jehovah. Christ is a title, Jesus is a name. I can't say for sure, but it may be that Paul has settled into this way of referring to the Lord as he is seeing Him at a place of authority at the right hand of God. Have you thought about how you refer to our Lord and what it means to you?

Verse two: It sounds like Paul led him to Jesus even though his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois had genuine faith. His father was a Greek. He lived in Lystra where Paul was stoned. Perhaps he saw the stoning and the miraculous walking away from it. Phil 2:19-23 He was a very special brother to Paul.

Three of the most beautiful words that could be used as an opening blessing are used. Grace – charis is said to be the most beautiful of Greek words. Without grace we would never choose to consider Jesus and his atonement. It is the beginning of the work of God in our lives but it also continues every work of God in our lives.

Mercy – eleos – follows grace. For once we have received the grace of God through the cross, He can be merciful to us. That is, He can pity our condition and be lenient with us. Still mercy proceeds peace in almost every case except Gal 6. We must obtain mercy before we can be at peace with God. Without mercy there is only justice to be found and how can we be at peace expecting justice? But if we have received the grace of God we can receive mercy and will be at peace with God. Paul is praying this for Timothy and we should pray it for those God puts on our hearts. I am not in the habit of praying for these wonderful gifts for people, but we could follow Paul's example as here is a case of him following Christ.

Peace – Eirene – the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot of what- soever sort that is. Strongs

Verse 3: Paul reminds Timothy that he had urged Timothy to stay in Ephesus to stand against false teachers, commanding them (Paul had Apostolic authority to make a command) to cease from teaching false doctrines.

Verse 4: The rest of the command he is to pass on is to not devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. The false teaching apparently relied upon who was descended from whom. Sounds a bit like Mormon research baptizing for dead relatives. Instead of promoting God's work it just promotes controversy. A good key to any teaching: Does it promote God's work by faith or controversies?

Verse 5: Paul is not trying to be hard on certain people but out of genuine love for them wants to keep them from promoting error. It sounds as if they were genuine in their beliefs but misguided. Paul has no impure motives to ask Timothy this. In fact, his conscience demands that he give this order.

Verse 6: Here is a serious heart issue which Paul is identifying in the false teachers. Unlike Paul's heart in giving the command to stop their teaching, these teachers wandered from love out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. The result is meaningless talk. Whenever we try to teach or share with any motive other than love with a good conscience and sincere faith, then we are either promoting ourselves or some system of man . It is a good test to ask our own hearts. Why do I want to share this? Is it out of love? Is it from a good conscience and sincere faith? If not then it is meaningless talk.

Verse 7: Here is a presumption that is not healthy. James 3:1, Titus 1:10,11 If this desire to teach is out of the motives Paul has mentioned then they are joined with humility that is teachable. Paul is describing attitudes that are so desire to be in front that they are adamant about what they think may be true.

Have you ever seen someone like this? Have you ever been like this? How should we respond when faced with this type of teaching? 2Tim 2:23-26

Verse 8: These teachers must have been using the Law to make up doctrines that were meaningless talk. What is our attitude about the Law? Do we see it as a good thing, as Paul saw it? How do we properly use the Law?

Verse 9-11: The Law is a set of rules that convicts of rebellion against God and shows our need of a Savior. We as Christians are also opposed to the things Paul mentions for they are against the Law of Love. Those things do not go along with being a new creature in Christ. The Law of the Spirit of life affects all our life not just the things Paul mentions. Ro 8:1-5 Col 3:17 Instead of trying to obey a code we yield to the Life of the Lord within us. The law is not only for conviction but for whatever conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

We have seen some of that conformation as we looked at Jesus in the OT. Paul felt very responsible for the gospel being spread, saying "which is entrusted to me." As an Apostle that is especially true. In what ways is it also true of you?