

Do the work.

1-2 Timothy and Titus



Justin McCorkle

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This work has been made with the hope that together we can search the scripture and develop a greater understanding of it. Hopefully, it will make your study of this topic more edifying, more profitable, and more enjoyable. It is not intended to take the place of your responsibility to prepare for the studies. Please devote adequate time to the material before our study, so we can all be edified by one another (Hebrews 10:24-25).

All verse references are taken from the New American Standard Bible 1995 unless otherwise noted.

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Epistles to Evangelists

“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:5)

The gospel traveled the known world within one generation of the death of our Savior in the first century A.D. This success can be credited primarily to the work of the Apostles through the Holy Spirit. However, there is only so much thirteen men are able to accomplish without aid and only so many places they can be at one time. The work of first century evangelists picked up where the apostles left off.

In most book stores you will find discussions of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus under the heading of “Pastoral Epistles.” That title first appeared in the 1500s and has continued unabated in most religious circles since then. However, Timothy and Titus were not “pastors” in the biblical sense of the word, nor do they fit into the “pastoral” designation found in denominational circles. These two men were evangelists; preachers of the gospel who were trained and sent out to bring souls to Christ and set churches into the order prescribed by Christ.

In this study we will be considering these three epistles to evangelists and seeking to learn, individually and as a church, lessons that will improve our service to the Lord in the community of Mauriceville.

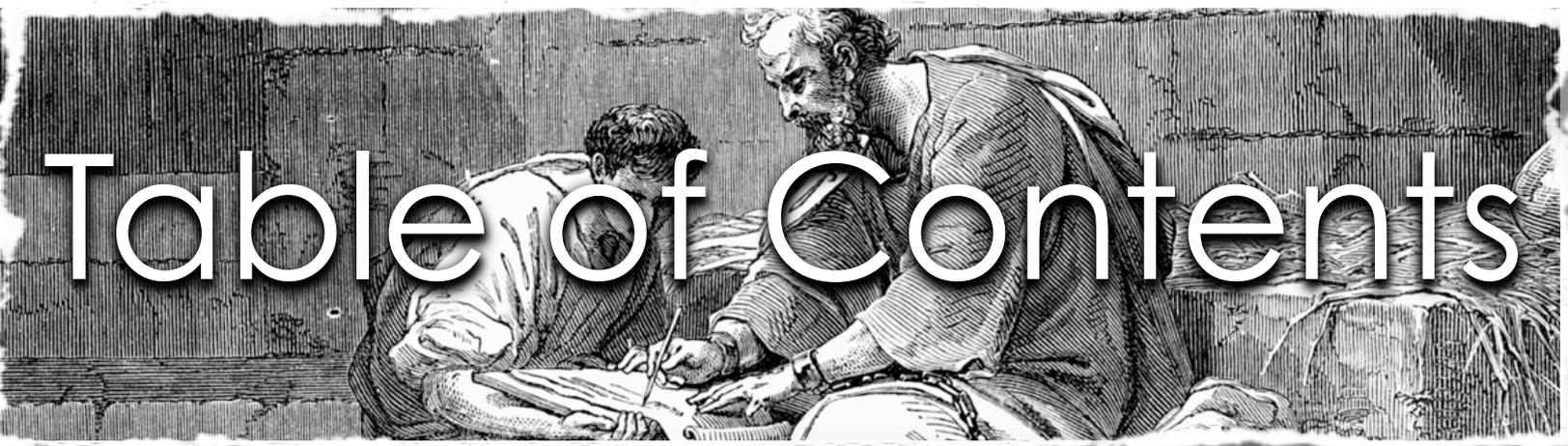


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Introduction to 1-2 Timothy and Titus

IN PREPARATION

1 Timothy 1

What did Paul urge Timothy to do?

What is the goal of instruction for Paul and Timothy?

When is the Law good?

Why did Paul find mercy?

These three letters have several commonalities, which makes sense as they are each written to evangelists. Even so, each letter is distinct in its purpose and circumstance. From the commonalities we learn what the role of an evangelist should universally entail. From the distinctions we learn of the relationships between these men, what struggles they were facing, and how the Lord’s plan for the church can be used to overcome any struggle that evangelists may face. In this introductory study to the evangelists’ epistles we will focus on Paul’s purpose for penning each correspondence and the time and circumstance of each letter.

Purpose of the Letters

1 Timothy

This letter arrives to the hands of Timothy, a young evangelist who was about 30 years of age, in order to encourage him in his work with the Ephesian church. Of the several pieces of instruction given, we may conclude that there were two main purposes for Paul’s writing.

First, Paul reminds him, “As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines...” (1 Timothy 1:3) There are several bits of false teaching alluded to by Paul in the letter that Timothy was to battle, but likely one of the greatest was the growing Gnostic heresy. Paul alludes to that teaching at the end of the letter when he writes of the “opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’ (*gnosis*)...” (6:20) We will discuss those teachings further in Lesson 6 of this study book.

Secondly, Paul says, “I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15) Everything from prayer and assembly roles to Christian relationships is discussed under this address.

Introduction to 1-2 Timothy and Titus

1 Timothy is a practical letter of instruction and exhortation for a man seeking to do the work of an evangelist among a growing church of God's people.

2 Timothy

Paul's second letter to Timothy is a heartfelt letter to a close friend. Paul's impending departure from this life finds him reminiscing on the relationship he shares with Timothy as well as general instruction concerning Timothy's work for the Lord. He implores, "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." (2 Timothy 1:13-14) Few letters have ever been penned which were more tragic and yet full of hope.

Titus

Titus' letter from the apostle is more closely related to 1 Timothy than 2 Timothy. Written near the same time, the instruction given concerns the organization of the churches in Crete. "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you..." (Titus 1:5)

The organizational work of evangelists is often overlooked, but Titus was charged to see to it that the congregations were ordered and behaving as the Lord intends.

Dating the Evangelists' Epistles

1 Timothy and Titus

The travels described in 1 Timothy and Titus are not found in the book of Acts. Both of these books were most likely written during the interim travels of Paul which took place between the end of Acts and Paul's subsequent release from Roman house arrest and his re-imprisonment and execution in Rome around A.D. 67. We can confidently place the writing of 1 Timothy and Titus at about A.D. 63.

Marshall Patton provides a reasonable sequence of events in the travels of Paul as likely took place after Paul's release from his Roman imprisonment. It is suggested that Paul left Rome after his acquittal for Asia Minor by way of Crete, where he left Titus. Paul arrived in Ephesus, left for a visit to Colosse (as was his plan-- Philemon 22), and then returned to

Introduction to 1-2 Timothy and Titus

Ephesus. He departed from there to Macedonia, leaving Timothy in Ephesus. “As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia...” (1 Timothy 1:3)

Paul likely wrote 1 Timothy and Titus from Macedonia. He requested Titus to join him in Nicopolis: “When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.” (Titus 3:12) It is commonly held that Paul departed from Nicopolis to visit Spain in the spring of A.D. 64. Clement, a disciple of Paul, would later write that Paul had “gone to the extremity of the west” in his preaching. (Truth Commentaries: 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon. Marshall Patton, 2001. Pg xiii-xiv)

2 Timothy

The city of Rome was burned by Emperor Nero, in his insanity, in A.D. 64. The emperor attempted to use Christians as a scapegoat for the crime and intensified his persecution toward them. Paul and Peter seem to have been among the victims of this madman.

The letter of 2 Timothy suggests a sequence of events after Paul’s return from Spain. He likely revisited Asia Minor where he leaves Trophimus sick. (2 Timothy 4:20) He reunites with Timothy at Ephesus. (2 Timothy 1:4) He then visits Troas. (2 Timothy 4:13) After these things he returns to Rome. It is not known whether Paul was arrested and carried to Rome or if he was arrested while already in Rome, but we do know that Titus left from Paul’s company in Rome and journeyed to Dalmatia. (2 Timothy 4:10)

Although the letter ends with the hope of a visitation with Timothy before his end arrives, the letter reads like a final exhortation meant to live on in the heart of Timothy after Paul’s execution. The letter was likely written very shortly before Paul’s death in A.D. 66 or 67.

Mode of Study

This study book will not follow a textual outline in the format of most commentaries. Instead, the author has selected topical headings wherein each lesson will contain Paul’s lessons on a given topic from the evangelists’ epistles in a compiled format. May we all grow together as we consider these letters and the numerous lessons found within!

Introduction to 1-2 Timothy and Titus

What was one of the major false teachings that Timothy needed to battle as alluded to in 1 Timothy?

What are the approximate dates for the three epistles?

Where did Paul likely go after his release from the Roman imprisonment recorded in the last chapters of Acts? What was the farthest west that he seems to have traveled?

What happened that caused Nero to intensify Christian persecutions in the mid-60s?
What two apostles seem to have been killed during this persecution?

Timothy and Titus: Sons of Paul

IN PREPARATION

1 Timothy 2

Who should we pray for and why?

What does God desire for all men?

How should a woman receive instruction?

How should women “continue”?

The apostle Paul often uses affectionate terms when speaking to his brothers and sisters in Christ, but they are not empty or trite. The expressions of kinship between this apostle and the Christians of his age reveal the deep bonds that exist between believers, especially during difficult times. Even still, some bonds of connection are naturally deeper than others. Such was the case between Paul, Timothy, and Titus. These three men labored together during various struggles. Paul viewed Titus and Timothy as spiritual sons. He was their mentor, and they were his trusted aids.

In this study we will be considering the history between these men. We will consider the affectionate terms with which Paul addressed them, when they initially met, and some of the experiences they shared with one another.

Paul and Titus

Paul met Titus before he met Timothy, although we cannot be sure exactly when they first had contact. The earliest relationship (or mention) of Titus with Paul is found in Galatians 2:1: “Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.” This trip to Jerusalem would have been the same journey as that recorded in Acts 15 where a discussion was taking place concerning the circumcision of the Gentile Christians. Titus left Antioch and journeyed to Jerusalem with Paul. It is likely that Titus was a member in Antioch before joining Paul as a traveling companion.

It is interesting that Luke never mentions Titus’ companionship in the book of Acts but he does discuss Timothy. This may simply be due to Theophilus, to whom Acts was written; it is possible that Theophilus had never met Titus and, therefore,

Timothy and Titus: Sons of Paul

would not have gained anything from the account by hearing of Titus' presence.

It is clear that a deep bond and trust existed between these men within the first few verses of the letter to Titus. Paul addresses his words, "To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior." (Titus 1:4) This "true child" has seen Paul through perilous journeys and amidst various enemies. He had also seen the works of God accomplished among the apostle. Titus became a trusted assistant of Paul, as the letter to Titus reveals.

Paul and Timothy

Much more has been written concerning the relationship between Paul and Timothy than of the apostle's relationship to Titus. Since we have two letters to Timothy that are more lengthy than the one to Titus and Luke records Timothy's presence and fails to mention Titus it is easy to see why this is the case. The first recording of Timothy takes place during Paul's second missionary journey as recorded in Acts 16:1-3:

"Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek."

It is possible that Paul had met Timothy during his first trip to this area, as recorded in Acts 14:6. Regardless, it was not until this time, with Timothy likely only being a youth around 17 -20 years of age, that he became a companion of the apostle. Years later Paul would reveal to bible students the depth of his affection for Timothy addressing him in letter, "To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." (1 Timothy 1:2)

This young man would later receive the last letter, as far as we know, the hand of Paul would ever pen. He again addresses Timothy as "my beloved son..." (2 Timothy 1:2) His heartfelt words continue,

"I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so

Timothy and Titus: Sons of Paul

that I may be filled with joy. For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:3-7)

Sincere faith, a soft heart, and a loyal friend are the thoughts that come to the mind of Paul when reflecting on the ten years or more that he had known this young man at the time of writing. Knowing that these may be among the last words he speaks to Timothy, Paul urges him, “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus... do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God...” (2 Timothy 2:1, 8)

One can only imagine the sorrow Timothy must have felt at the loss of his friend and mentor upon the murder of Paul. However, the instruction given him surely would have eased his heart in knowing that all Christians are called to be willing to make this sacrifice. External history claims that Timothy did indeed follow Paul’s example at a later time in giving his own life for the cause of Christ.

Bonds Between Christians

May we also seek to learn from the evangelists’ epistles of the true love that Christian ought to share with one another. We are fellow laborers in God’s field, we are called by the same gospel, and we are willing to suffer the same end as these men. Those are not bonds we share with any others in the world. Let us love, then, in deed-- not in word alone.

Timothy and Titus: Sons of Paul

When is the earliest mention of Titus? Where does this correspond to in Acts and what is a possible reason that Luke did not record him there?

When is Timothy first mentioned? What was his approximate age at that time?

What did Paul urge Timothy to do, as this lesson discusses, in his last letter to him?

What lessons do you think we can learn from the relationship between Paul and these two evangelists?

The Work of Evangelists

IN PREPARATION

1 Timothy 3

What is managing the household compared to?

What might a novice elder become?

What must happen to the deacons before they are placed in office?

Why does Paul say he was writing?

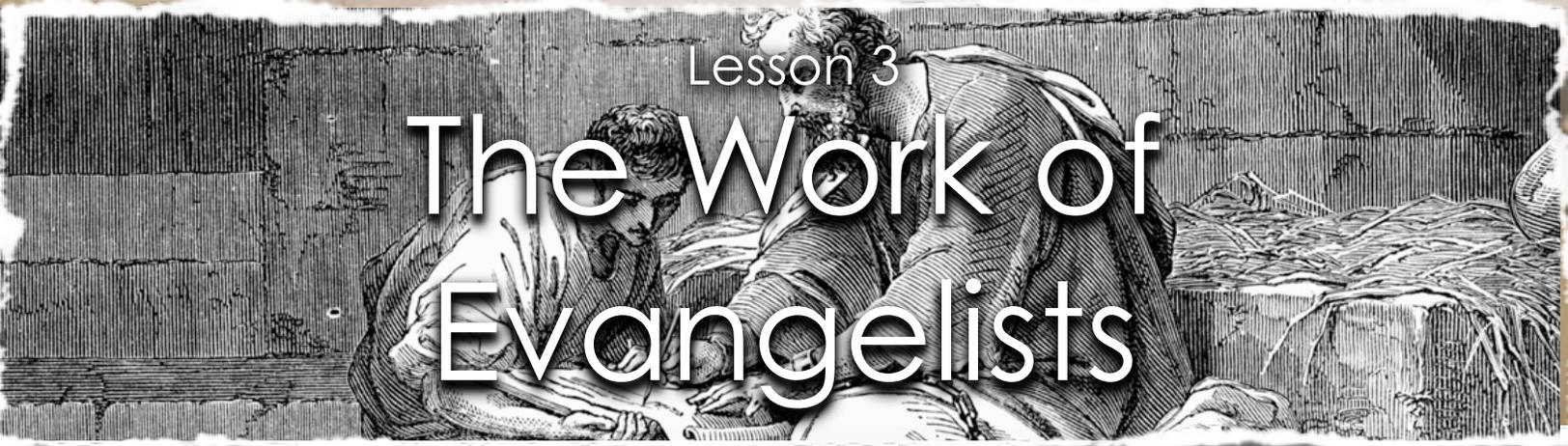
1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are the premier books of the New Testament for learning about the God-ordained work of an evangelist (this term is used interchangeably with preacher and minister). The work of a preacher is according to Scripture is often very different than what is seen in the religious world today. In this study we will consider the main descriptions of the work of an evangelist according to the apostle Paul as found within the evangelists' epistles and hopefully better learn how to employ evangelists in our local church to the glory of the Lord.

Preserving the Truth

Paul repeatedly tasks Timothy and Titus to preserve the truth of the gospel as it was originally taught to them by the apostle. Doctrine is often dismissed as unimportant in our post-modern society, but consider how seriously Paul taught these evangelists to regard the teaching. At one point he writes,

"In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women... Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching... Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you." (1 Timothy 4:6-7, 13, 16)

Timothy was tasked with a mission to hold "sound doctrine" so that he would "ensure salvation" for all who heard! This same young man was later encouraged, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness." (2 Timothy 2:15-16) Paul writes these words knowing that it is easy to mishandle God's word. Only a humble



The Work of Evangelists

student who is devoted to truth will grow in such a way to handle God's word accurately. Preserving the truth also means making the truth heard by all. Some might be tempted to simply ignore what these evangelists were preaching. With that in mind, Paul urges Titus, "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." (Titus 2:15) It was not that Titus was 'in charge' of the church. Rather, the "authority" of his message is the authority of God through His word. Preachers of the gospel must ensure that the truth is understood by all and that the message is not disregarded.

Teaching Others to Teach

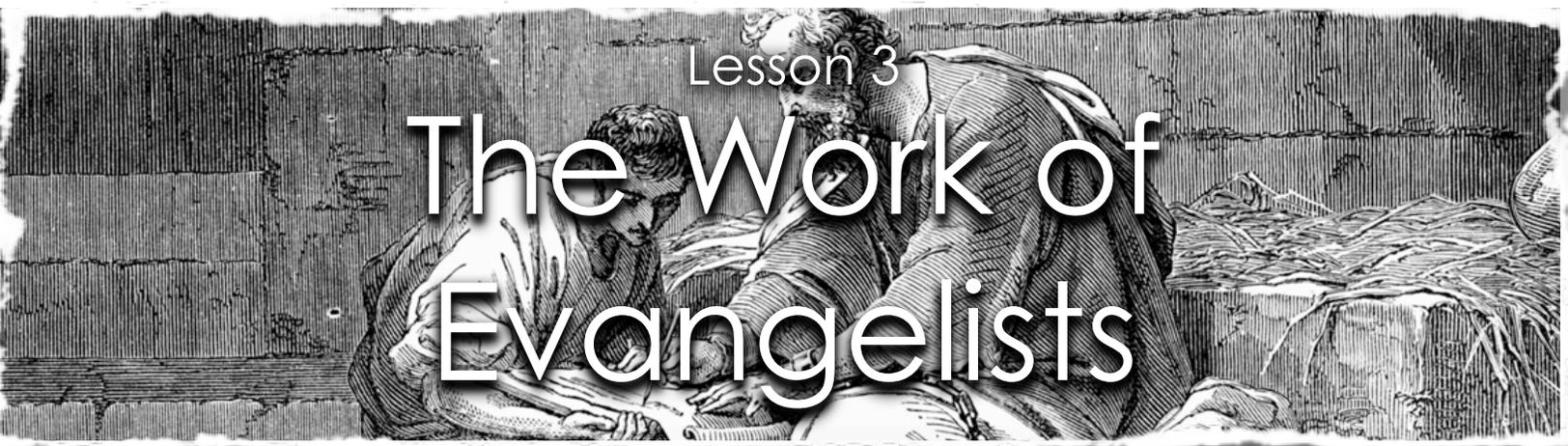
Paul had equipped Timothy and Titus to be able to preach the truth. An important part of their work as evangelists was to pass the skills and knowledge that they had attained on to others. "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2)

Evangelists must find others to impart their skills to so that the next generation can continue successfully in the work. We should also note that these teachers do not need to solely teach others to become evangelists, though. They were to entrust these things to "faithful men [anthropos]," or "people." We need men and women who are capable of teaching God's word to unbelievers. All of the saints need to be learning God's word so that they can teach that truth at every opportunity. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Showing an Example of Godly Behavior

A preacher who does not live what he preaches will be ineffective in his work. Hypocrisy will condemn his soul and will harm the faith of many others. Instead, evangelists are to show a good example to the brethren to follow. Paul writes,

"Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth..." (2 Timothy 2:22-25)



The Work of Evangelists

They are teachers; they are not to be quarrelsome. Others may wrong them; they are to teach and be patient, gently correcting others so that their souls may be won. These things are challenges for all. Nevertheless, evangelists must show the way.

Leading the Church in Spreading the Gospel

As the word “evangelist” implies (“proclaimer of good news”), a preacher must be able to lead the church to spread the gospel in the community. We read, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus... preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction... be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:1-5) “Do the work of an evangelist” can also be translated, “let your work be evangelistic in nature.” Evangelism is essential to the growth of God’s kingdom. Paul speaks of his own evangelistic efforts when he writes,

“[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4-7)

Paul preached the message because God wants all to be saved and this is accomplished through the blood of Christ alone! That truth motivated the apostle to work hard, and so should it motivate evangelists and all Christians today.

Scripturally Organizing the Congregation

Evangelists are tasked with scripturally organizing the local church. Titus was instructed, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you...” (Titus 1:5) Preachers must “set in order what remains,” and that will vary from place to place. Timothy needed to concern himself with the appointment of both elders and deacons. (1 Timothy 3) In some congregations there are systems of evangelism, instructions of duties, and training up of workers that will be necessary. Whatever is lacking according to the biblical pattern, the evangelist must be setting in order.

The office of the evangelist is a God-ordained role in the local church that is essential to the proper functioning of the body. Let us always encourage those who fill this role to rise to the standards that the evangelists’ epistles set for them.

The Work of Evangelists

What would be the outcome if Timothy paid attention to himself and his teaching?

Who was Timothy to entrust the teachings to, so that they may teach others? Who was Paul referring to?

How are evangelists to respond to those who wrong them or attempt to quarrel with them?

What was the primary charge given to Titus? What is the organizational role of evangelists?

Warnings Against Apostasy

IN PREPARATION

1 Timothy 4

What are the “doctrines of demons”?

What is the profit of godliness?

What should Timothy give attention to?

What should Timothy “take pains” with?

The Lord expects His disciples to hold faithfully to the truth; Paul writes with the same expectation to Timothy and Titus. However, encouragement to consider themselves and calling to mind examples of those who have failed in their faith is an aid to the steadfastness of these men.

Take Heed

Timothy, like each of us, needed reminders to remain faithful to the Way and to keep himself focused on the eternal reward. Paul writes, “This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.” (1 Timothy 1:18-19) We have no knowledge of what prophecies had been made concerning Timothy, but Paul seems to imply that Timothy would do an important work for the heavenly King. While others had “suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith,” Paul commands Timothy to focus on his work for the Lord in order to keep such from happening to him.

Paul writes from prison, “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.” (2 Timothy 1:13-14) This text brings to our minds a couple of important lessons: First, that the message of the gospel is to be regarded as a “treasure which has been entrusted” to us. And secondly, that the temptation to compromise that treasure is very real and needs to be warned against.

Notable Failures

For the rest of the lesson we will consider some of the people

Warnings Against Apostasy

mentioned in the evangelists' epistles who did not follow Paul's advice and lost their faith to various temptations.

Failure Through Blasphemy

Paul laments at one point, "Among these [who have shipwrecked in their faith] are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme." (1 Timothy 1:20) What had led these men to blasphemy? Was the blasphemy with their lips or with their manner of living? We do not know the answer to these questions, but we know that these men had once used their strength to praise the Lord and seemed to have turned against that confession. This truth should cause us to pause and consider ourselves, lest we who have praised him be dragged away and turn to blaspheming our Redeemer.

Failure Through Fear

We are called to lose our fear of death in Christ. (Matthew 10:28) Yet, many Christians witnessed the sufferings of their brethren, such as Paul, and shrunk away from the faith in fear of suffering the same. The apostle remembers, "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes." (2 Timothy 1:15) It was very tempting to many brethren to distance themselves from this faithful teacher in order to save their own necks. At one point Paul was brought before the emperor in order to give a defense of Christianity. What an opportunity for faithful believers to stand together and make a plea for the faith! But, alas, the apostle says, "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them." (2 Timothy 4:16) Jesus suffered the same desertion when He was arrested. Although we love our brethren and long for them to stand with us, we must be willing to stand alone if necessary. Paul was. Are you? Let us not fail in our faith due to fear of persecutions.

Failure Through False Doctrine

Another failure that Paul witnessed repeatedly is failure through false teachings. Therefore Paul urged Timothy, "But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some." (2 Timothy 2:16-18) A future lesson will be

Warnings Against Apostasy



dedicated to studying some of the particular false teachings that were a problem of Paul's days, but from the bad examples of these men we learn that doctrine matters and clinging to a false message can cost our souls and the souls of those who hear us.

Failure Through Wordliness

Lastly we learn of Demas: "Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica..." (2 Timothy 4:10) What sad words to have eternally recorded as a description of this man's end. When faced with a choice between loving this world and loving our Savior, what would you choose? Demas made the easy choice that won for himself some temporary pleasure and eternal suffering. His attachment to the sinful lusts of men caused him to desert a brother in an hour of great trial and to desert the One who died to save him. Let us not follow his footsteps.

Learning from Failure

There are many ways to fail in our faith, but these few summarize many of the temptations to apostasy that we, and evangelists, face. May we remember these men for all of the right reasons and look to those like Paul, Timothy, and Titus that chose faith-- even until their end.

Warnings Against Apostasy

What lessons can we learn from 2 Timothy 1:13-14?

What did Hymenaeus and Alexander need to learn? What lesson can we learn from their sin?

Why did Phygelus and Hermogenes fall away? What others were suffering from the same spiritual malady?

Would you want to be remember as Demas is? How can we keep his failure from happening to ourselves?

Teaching on Church Finances

IN PREPARATION

1 Timothy 5

What did Paul urge Timothy to do?

What is the goal of instruction for Paul and Timothy?

When is the Law good?

Why did Paul find mercy?

There are a great number of instructions given to these evangelists with regard to their teaching and organization of the Lord's churches. The church's leadership, doctrine, lifestyle, and evangelistic efforts are all seen to be by the Lord through the apostles. Does it not make sense, then, that the Lord has regulation concerning church finances that evangelists need to be made aware of? The apostle Paul dedicates some time in his writing of 1 Timothy to giving some instruction concerning the proper use of the Lord's money by the church.

Benevolence for Widows

In a time before social security and pensions the needs for relief of widows was very real and ever present. One of the earliest conflicts that took place among Christians had to do with the overlooking of hellenist widows of the Jerusalem church. (Acts 6:1-6) There seems to have been some type of trouble concerning the benevolence toward widows in Ephesus as well, but the problem may have been due to too many being cared for rather than too few.

Much of the conversation in 1 Timothy 5 is concerned with the relief of "widows indeed." The term is a qualifying term that describes widows who meet the qualifications necessary to put them on the list of those receiving recurring, seemingly permanent, support from the church. This benevolence should not be confused with short term and limited benevolent relief. We see short term benevolent needs being met by the church for many Christians in need. (Acts 11:27-29, 1 Corinthians 16:1-3) Those funds are meant to help needy Christians during a difficult time so that they can get back onto their feet and are not to be permanent. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

Concerning the permanent list of support for needy widows Paul has this to say: "Honor widows who are widows indeed... Now



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she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.” (1 Timothy 5:3, 5) The “honor” in this text is with regard to financial support. There is a limitation placed by the inspired teacher on which widows are to be placed on “the list,” which can only refer to the ongoing relief. (5:9) One who is a “widow indeed” is qualified by a number of parameters as described in 5:9-11:

“A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to put younger widows on the list...”

The inspired author was not seeking to simply give his opinion on a church matter but was rather delivering as a command the divine regulations of the church treasury. This idea may be foreign to many minds today since there is a general view that what a church does with its money is not a concern of the Lord. However, the funds given into the collection are sanctified for the uses that are authorized by our God and should be handled with great care. The apostle proves this point further by showing the distinction between individuals’ funds and the church’s funds.

Individuals’ Responsibilities

It is possible that some brethren were attempting to abdicate their responsibilities of caring for parents and grandparents onto the church rather than caring for those needs themselves. We make this observation due to the instructions given to Timothy regarding his teaching on the issue of the church finances. Paul writes,

“but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God... But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:4, 8)

With bold terms the apostle announces that Christians who do not take care of their individual responsibilities are “worse than unbelievers”! It is plain to see that an individual

Teaching on Church Finances

has responsibilities that extend beyond what the church is to be doing financially. He restates this principle again in verse 16: “If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.”

If even the use of the church’s funds toward believers is so strictly regulated why is it that so many have come to see the church as a charity for the masses? While Christians should be seeking to do good to all (Galatians 6:10), it is also essential that we understand the limitations placed upon the use of the common fund. The church’s first goal is to spread the gospel. Benevolence to needy Christians is secondary to that mission. Benevolence toward outsiders should be handled by individuals, whether alone or in concert, separate from the church’s treasury.

Supporting Laborers

The spiritual work of the church, teaching the gospel to unbelievers and equipping the saints, is the primary focus of the apostle Paul and should be the focus of the treasury, as well. Paul teaches, “The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’” (1 Timothy 5:17-18) Paul used the same passage to teach of the support of evangelists in 1 Corinthians 6:6-9. The principle is set forth from Deuteronomy 25:4 and applied to the spiritual labor of the church that those who do this work deserve financial support for their labors. Whereas widows indeed are to receive this “honor” the laborers, here referring to elders, are to receive “double honor,” that is to say “all the more-so.”

The Lord’s treasury in the local church should be purposed to do the work assigned by Jesus-- no more and no less. Let us continually focus our minds on performing the appropriate tasks of the church and through these authorized means to bring Him the honor He is due!

Teaching on Church Finances

What is a “widow indeed”?

What is the “list” Paul refers to? Who is to NOT be put on the list?

What does Paul say of those who do not provide for their families? What may have been going on at the church to motivate Paul to write about that?

Who does 1 Timothy 5 speak of financially supporting besides qualified widows? What passage does he quote to teach the principle and where else did he use the same text?

Beware of False Teachings

IN PREPARATION

1 Timothy 6

Describe those who teach a “different” doctrine.

What is the goal of instruction for Paul and Timothy?

What should Timothy instruct those in who are rich?

What should Timothy avoid?

False teachings have always seeped into the Lord’s church. If the gospel is polluted, souls are lost. (Galatians 1:6-9) For this reason Paul dedicates portions of the letters to the evangelists giving instruction on how to deal with various false doctrines facing the churches. Some of the teachings are still prevalent today while others have ceased, but all teach principles to Christians today about both how and what doctrines must be confronted with the truth of Christ.

Jewish Meddlings

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, constantly ran interference between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. It was difficult to build unity between these two groups of new Christians. Issues were inevitable for Timothy and Titus in their respective areas as well. It seems that some Jewish Christians were clinging to a zeal for the Law of Moses that sometimes led them astray from the law of Christ. Many Jews of this day were zealous for their genealogies. This obsession had crept into the churches, or so it seems. Paul writes to Timothy,

“instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.” (1 Timothy 1:3-7)

These Jewish brethren had a zeal for that law but “do not understand” what they are studying. Their teachings were “strange,” “mere speculations,” based on “myths,” and revolved around “endless genealogies.” Timothy was tasked with instructing these men “not to teach” those things any longer. A

Beware of False Teachings

difficult task indeed! They needed to be reminded of the core of Christianity-- the “goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

Some who would teach false messages are not trying to be evil or destroy God’s work (although they may destroy it, if not stopped) but have simply lost sight of the goal of the preaching. These must be instructed and restrained in their teaching until they have refocused on the simple message. On the other hand, some Jews were hard hearted and troublemakers. To Titus Paul writes,

“For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain... For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.” (Titus 1:10-14)

Those of the circumcision in Crete were causing problems in the churches. They had ill motives and their teachings turn people from the truth. Whole families were being weakened by their evil works. Titus was not to tolerate their works. He is commanded to “reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith.” Although these false teachers were to be marked and avoided if they did not repent (Titus 3:10) the goal of Titus initially was still to win these dividers back to Christ if possible.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a growing problem during Paul’s days and it would become much worse during the next two centuries. The earliest forms of this teaching are still somewhat unknown and there were several Gnostic sects that held unique views. This false teaching as found in Ephesus seem to have had teachings that condemned fleshly pleasures of any kind. Note Paul’s description of these teachers:

“some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.” (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

These Gnostics condemned pleasure so things like marriage and tasty foods were condemned by them. They thought godliness could be found only through discomfort. But

Beware of False Teachings

Paul says that “everything created by God is good”-- things like marriage and food. It is a “doctrine of demons” to forbid marriage to those who have authority from God to do so. The apostle explicitly names these teachers to be of the Gnostic variety in 1 Timothy 6:20-21 saying, “guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’ (gnosis) — which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.”

Resurrection Woes

The resurrection was also a source of controversy at times. The Corinthians struggled with outright denials of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15) and Paul tells Timothy of another teaching that was spreading: “Among [foolish talkers] are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.” (2 Timothy 2:16-18)

The resurrection from the dead is a great hope for all Christians. To say it has passed is to deny our own hope! Timothy was charged to keep an eye out for such teachings.

Religion without Repentance

Lastly, Paul spoke to his beloved friend about an attitude that develops among Christians. It destroys souls and churches. He describes those with this attitude, saying, “For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:2-9)

These people have sins are of a more hidden nature. Most of these things are attitudes rather than specific sins. They hold “a form of godliness” but “deny its power.” That is to say, it is a convenient type of faith that does not change their priorities or goals. These are the same type of men who “always learn” yet can be found captivating women in their homes. Their faith was insincere. Their lusts lead them to places they ought not be a to do things they ought not do. That type of faith is appealing to many, but not to God.

These false teachings and many others cost souls and were to be taken seriously by the evangelists. May we all take them, and similar teachings today, just as seriously.

Beware of False Teachings

What was the problem with the Jewish teachers in 1 Timothy 1:3-7?

What seems to be the particular teaching of the Gnostics that Timothy was interacting with?

What false teaching concerning the resurrection was spreading? What was the effect of the teaching on the brethren?

How is the religion of those who had “a form of godliness” but denied its power comparable to some popular teachings today?

Basic Teachings to the Church

IN PREPARATION

Titus 1

Why had Paul left Titus in Crete?

Where were many “rebellious men” coming from?

What had one said of Cretans?

They profess to know God, but how do they deny Him?

God’s people need to be constantly reminded of the basics of Christianity because most of the greatest struggles we face as Christians relate to the most basic elements of the truth. The apostle Paul gives instructions to Timothy and Titus regarding how they are to remind the brethren of the basics of the faith and the reasons for doing so. In this lesson we will consider many of those ‘basics’ and take the exhortation in ourselves not to forget the foundations of our faith.

Behavior Toward Outsiders

One of the basic teachings we must remember concerns how we are to behave toward those outside of the church. Paul begins by reminding us to pray concerning them, saying, “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” (1 Timothy 2:1-2) The object of our prayer is that those outside will let us work and worship in peace. The rest of the chapter shows that the work of evangelism will be more easily accomplished if we are left alone.

Although some animosity toward the faith cannot be avoided, we must be careful to ensure that we are not inciting hatred from unbelievers by our actions. Thus, Paul tells Titus, “Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.” (Titus 3:1-2) We cannot blame the world for hating us if we are behaving poorly. However, if we are “peaceable” and “gentle” toward outsiders then we will have clean consciences. As Christ’s church we should be striving to live at peace with all men as much as depends on us.

Basic Teachings to the Church

Behavior in the Assembly

How we ought to behave in the assembly of the saints is a matter of basic teaching. Much of 1 Timothy 2 is devoted to this consideration and is directly related to our behavior toward outsiders. When they come in among us, what will they see? Paul tells Timothy what outsiders should see.

The men ought to be leading the assembly. He says, “I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.” (2:8) The “lifting up holy hands” is a figure of speech referring to the declaration of innocence. In other words, godly men ought to be leading the assembly in its approach to the father. Paul is probably using the word “pray” as a synecdoche to represent the entire worship.

Women ought to be portraying a godly image as well. Paul speaks of their attire and says, “I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.” (2:9-10) Our Christian women should be focused on clothing themselves spiritually, first of all. The “proper clothing” is modest and discreet (as opposed to flamboyant and revealing) and her good works complete her attire. She has adorned herself with good deeds that bring glory to the Lord. Paul adds,

“A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created... And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman... But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.” (2:11-15)

Although unpopular today, the apostle clearly teaches that the leadership roles in the assembly should be assigned to godly men. (2:8) Women, then, are not to lead the assembly. With regard to leading she should “remain quiet.” (Note that this restriction is not absolute with regard to speaking at all, but only to leading the assembly. -Colossians 3:16) Two reasons for this restriction are stated: 1. Adam was created first. 2. Eve was deceived and fell. The argument is that it is the natural order from the beginning for the men to lead the approach to God, and also that it was women who led the departure from God and are thus not to lead the way to Him now. However, the apostle seeks to comfort the women by explaining that they “will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith...” If men are to lead the assembly, then who are women to lead?

Basic Teachings to the Church

The answer is children. Their “preservation” is with regard to their leading in faith and the “bearing of children” refers to much more than the initial birth, but also to the spiritual development of the child. A mother will have a great impact on the faith of the young; a fact that she should glory in. (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15)

Emphasize the Basics

The best way for a church to grow stronger is to constantly look back to the basics. When the foundational truths of the faith become secondary, division tends to follow. Paul says, “It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.” (2 Timothy 2:11-14) The Christians need to be reminded of these basics: We died with Christ and will live with Him (Romans 6:3-8), but we must remain faithful. And if we lose our faith it does not change the nature of Christ. When people lose sight of our collective goal they “wrangle about words” and that “leads to the ruin of the hearers.”

Again Paul writes, “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus... These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” (Titus 2:11-15) Godly living must be constantly emphasized. It is basic, but it is a great need for all to hear.

Engage in Good Deeds

Lastly, Paul gives another basic teaching: “those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.” (Titus 3:8) There are opportunities to do good deeds all around us! We must seek out and fill the needs of others because these things are “profitable for men,” not only physically but spiritually. We will gain influence with others and open doors to speak God’s truth.

The basic teachings are the foundation of our hope in Christ. May we constantly return to them and make sure that we are following the teachings of our Master!

Basic Teachings to the Church

Who is to lead the assembly in study and worship? What reasons are given?

Explain the proper attire for a Christian woman.

What was Timothy to solemnly charge the brethren? How does the “trustworthy statement” relate to the solemn charge?

What are some good deeds that Christians can do that are profitable for all men?

Interacting with the Brethren

IN PREPARATION

Titus 2

What are older men to be?

What should older women teach younger women?

What must young men be?

What is Jesus identified as in 2:13?

It has been said that ‘preaching is the gospel with personality.’ There is certainly a great deal of interaction that takes place between an evangelist and the body of believers he is working with. So, how should a preacher be interacting with the brethren? A couple of misunderstandings that are held by many should be addressed at the outset.

There is a misconception in many churches that evangelists have no authority. Paul’s instructions to the Timothy and Titus reveal that these men did have authority in the congregation relating to their teaching of God’s word and establishing the Scriptural model of organization. Thus, just as with elders and deacons, these men have spheres of authority that is derived from their positions as established by the Lord through His word. Having a proper understanding of their authority is necessary to understanding the instructions given to the evangelists regarding their interactions with brethren.

On the other hand, some have a ‘pastoral’ view of preachers that would grant them complete authority in the church. This view is also false. The shepherds, although appointed by the evangelist, are ultimately responsible for the direction of the congregation. (Acts 20:28) We must be careful to ensure that we do not exalt the evangelist to a position that Scripture has not granted him. This, too, is essential to understanding the instructions about proper interaction with brethren.

Be Respectful

Respect must be given in order to be received. There is no way an evangelist can continue in a work where he is viewed as disrespectful by the membership. Paul says, “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.” (1 Timothy 5:1-2)



Interacting with the Brethren

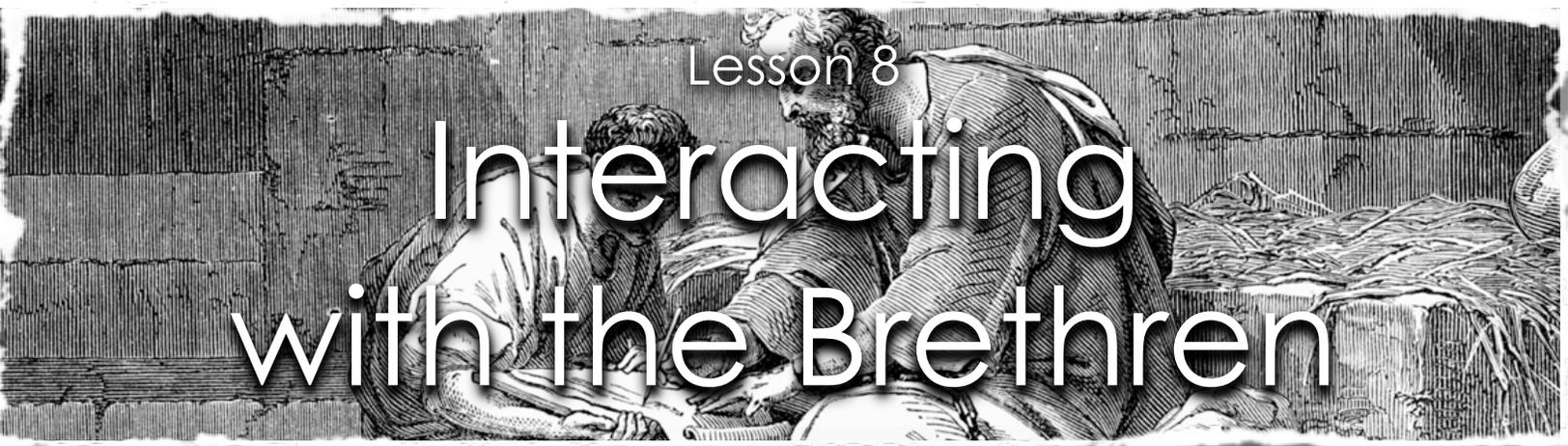
Family relationships show the respect and purity which Timothy should have toward all members of the body. Appealing to an older man as a father is much more likely to bring godly results as Timothy instructs. The older women ought to feel the warmth and respect from this young man in the same way she feels those things from her son. Younger men and women should see the love and respect from Timothy that would be picturesque of godly sibling. Thinking of our brethren in this way should help us to think before we speak and to be united in familial-type bonds as we labor for the Lord.

Be Cautious

Timothy's position of leadership in the church brought with it the possibilities of destructive mistakes. Two grave errors to avoid with regard to his interactions with brethren concerned accusations against elders and the appointment of new leaders.

Timothy is cautioned, "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning." (1 Timothy 5:19-20) Moses' law required two or three witnesses for capital offenses. Jesus commanded two or three to speak to erring ones before marking. (Matthew 18:16) Paul commands two or three witnesses before accusations against elders are considered. Shepherds are in a position of great responsibility and there is a possibility that others will want to discredit them out of anger. Timothy is warned not to take serious unfounded accusations against them. However, if proof of sin comes forward Timothy was to "rebuke in the presence of all." Leaders will serve as examples, either of faithfulness or as warnings against departure.

Since the evangelist is to be an organizer of the church and that is to include appointing new leaders, it is important that they take heed to the men they are raising up. Paul writes, "Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin." (1 Timothy 5:22) The laying on of hands here refers to appointment of individuals to an office within the church. (Acts 6:6) Evangelists must take pains to ensure that the men appointed are qualified for their positions as directed by the Holy Spirit. (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9) If preachers fail to invest the due diligence necessary they will share the blame for the "sins of others."



Interacting with the Brethren

Be Impartial

Partiality has destroyed many churches. Bending the teachings of God in order to accommodate a person-- whether it be due to friendship, influence, or money-- will lead a church into ruin. Therefore, the apostle instructs, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.” (1 Timothy 5:21) Timothy must preach the truth to all and treat all by the principles that Paul has outlined in these letters.

Be Bold

Repeatedly the evangelists are urged to speak the truth with boldness. Paul says, “Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.” (2 Timothy 2:14) A preacher of God’s word must “solemnly charge” that God’s word is obeyed. Undoubtedly, this will give some cause to attempt to dismiss the evangelist.

Some may attack the youth of Timothy, so Paul states, “Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.” (1 Timothy 4:12) If Timothy were resting on his own wisdom then perhaps others would have cause to ridicule his youth. But if he is preaching God’s word then the age of the speaker is irrelevant! Titus was told, “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” (Titus 2:15) Some might be tempted to simply ignore Titus as he preached. Paul tells the preacher not to allow that to happen. God’s word must be heard. However, boldness does not necessitate rudeness. Even speaking boldly should be done with love and with gracious speech. (Colossians 4:1-5)

The thoughtful Bible student can see within the passages referenced within this lesson that the evangelists obviously had authority within the churches to organize and teach, but also that these men were not authorities unto themselves. Preachers or not, all of us can learn to have a better balance between boldness, respect, and love as we interact with one another.

Interacting with the Brethren

What are two common misconceptions about preachers?

Timothy was cautioned with regard to his actions in what two areas that relate to church leaders?

How might partiality destroy a church?

What excuse to despise Timothy was Paul concerned about? How does that relate to the charge given Titus to let no one “disregard” him?

Appointing Leaders

IN PREPARATION

Titus 3

What were “we” also once?

How did God save us?

When should a factious man be rejected?

What must “our people” learn?

In the last lesson we discussed the lessons given to Timothy and Titus about how they should interact with the brethren. A portion of those instructions concerned the interacting with elders accused of sin and the appointment of new leaders within the church. This lesson will build off of those ideas in order to gain a greater understanding of the role evangelists are to play in appointing leaders.

Appointing Shepherds

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you...” (Titus 1:5) The charge given to Titus was by no means an easy one. This evangelist was to visit the various churches in Crete and lead them through the process of selecting and appointing me to serve as the spiritual shepherds of each group. Evangelists are to lead churches to the same goal today. The selection process is not arbitrary or based solely on popularity. Rather, men are to be selected who have shown themselves to be faithful spiritual leaders, with each man’s home serving as a primary test of his leadership. Two parallel lists of qualifications are given to Titus and Timothy. To Titus he says,

“if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:6-9)

Some of the qualifications are personality traits to look for, others are more specific and refer to family life. The “husband of one wife” makes allusion to the fact this is a ‘one-woman



Appointing Leaders

man.’ (The NET Notes contain worthwhile comments on this topic.) While the NASB translates the next statement as “having children who believe,” the NET is probably correct in its rendering of, “with faithful children.” The parallel statement in 1 Timothy 3:4 argues for this translation, as well. The idea is that the children of these men respect their leadership and bring them honor. In complete, Paul writes to Timothy,

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:2-7)

The bar is set high for those who would desire the office of a shepherd. These men are put into position (as implied by their qualifications) to oversee the work, teach the saints, manage the congregation, care for the spiritual needs of the membership, and help the work to continue among unbelievers. Each man who is considered for this position should be examined to see if they have the traits, familial qualifications, and leadership skills necessary to properly fill this office.

Supporting Shepherds

Although it has somewhat fallen out of practice today, the apostle also anticipated the need to support the shepherds in their work. He instructs Timothy, “The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’” (1 Timothy 5:17-18) Paul uses the quotation from Deuteronomy 25:4 also when discussing the support of preachers. (1 Corinthians 9:9-11) The principle is thus laid forth for the church that those who labor are worthy of their support. If a shepherd devotes himself to “preaching and teaching” in the church then he is qualified to be supported in his efforts. While modern innovations such as retirement plans, ongoing employment, social security, etc. have made this less necessary for many shepherds, the authority is still present for the church to be involved in such support.

Appointing Leaders

Appointing Deacons

Deacons, official servants of the church, are also to be appointed by the evangelists. These individuals oversee the physical assets of the church and benevolent needs of the congregation. (Acts 6:1-6) They serve the church to care for these important tasks so that the shepherds can focus on the needs of the church and the evangelists can focus on organization and evangelism. Paul speaks of the men who would fill this office:

“Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.” (1 Timothy 3:8-12)

These men are to be “tested” since they are to be overseeing financial responsibilities. The church must be able to trust them. They also are family men who have shown wisdom in the home. The “women” who are mentioned may be referring to the wives of the deacons or to special female servants who serve the church in other, various needs. Perhaps this was the case with Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2.

The evangelists are given important tasks with regard to the appointing of leaders in the church. They must seriously consider the requirements of office, teach those things to the church, organize a plan of appointment, and see the qualified men placed into the offices. The motivation for this work is given in two statements:

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do... For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 3:1, 13)

Pray that the Lord continues to raise up leaders for these positions and evangelists skillful enough to appoint them.

Appointing Leaders

What are some of the personality traits desirable, according to Paul, in a man who would be an elder?

What is an alternate to the NASB translation of “children who believe” and what parallel statement in 1 Timothy 3 suggests its superiority?

Is financial support of shepherds Scriptural? Why? Why has it fallen out of general practice?

What is the work of deacons? Why is their work important to the church?

Duties of All

IN PREPARATION

2 Timothy 1

Where did Timothy learn his faith?

What should Timothy join Paul in doing?

What must Timothy retain?

What had Onesimus done for Paul?

We have spent a good deal of time discussing the various duties of elders, deacons, and evangelists, but it would be incorrect to think that those offices contain the only duties necessary to the proper functioning of the church. In fact, all of the members of the body have responsibilities with regard to teaching, evangelism, and edification to various degrees. In this lesson we will consider a few of the specific duties of Christians as described in the evangelists' epistles.

Duties of Slaves and Masters

Bondslaves were common during the days of the apostles. Most of these individuals had sold themselves into slavery for a set time in order to advance their social standing through learning a new trade or to pay off debts. Once a slave, though, they may find that their former condition was preferable. Thus, resentment and bitterness seem to have been common toward the slave's masters. However, it was important that Christianity be well represented and godly attitudes prevail even among slaves. Paul writes, "Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." (Titus 2:9-10) 'Adorning the doctrine' is extremely important to the Lord. Jesus desires that others glorify the Lord through the things we do. (Matthew 5:16) If bondslaves are combative or cheat their masters the entire church will be disrespected! It is also true, though, that masters who are Christians should represent the faith well to their slaves. Paul tells Timothy,

"All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they

Duties of All

are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.” (1 Timothy 6:1-2)

All souls are prized by the Lord and a person’s standing among men is irrelevant to the Creator. Masters were to treat their slaves well or be judged by God.

Duties of Older Christians

Older Christians have experience and wisdom. They are seasoned spiritual warriors that have witnessed the struggles and successes of the Lord’s church in past times. These individuals must accept the responsibilities placed upon them to impart their knowledge to the younger generations. Titus is commanded to enlist the older Christians into the work of equipping the younger saints. Paul says, “Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.” (Titus 2:2) Those traits are not traits that would be typically associated with young men. Thus, Paul is exhorting the older men to be examples of these things to the younger men. The apostle continues,

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.” (Titus 2:3-5)

“Likewise,” the older women ought to be examples to the younger. Their experience is invaluable for young women who are enduring the trials these older ones have gone through. It is a mistake to believe that the lessons on loving husbands and children are unnecessary or that those things just come naturally. To varying degrees all young women need guidance in these matters. Will our older Christians rise up to guide the next generations?

Duties of the Young

Young Christians also have particular duties that they should give attention to. The duties of young women were already described within the same section detailing what older women are to teach. They include, “to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the

Duties of All

word of God will not be dishonored.” Just as the virtuous woman cared for all in her home and saw to their needs, so young Christian women ought to see to their families. (Proverbs 31:10-31)

Young men are also needed to tend to duties. Titus, being a young man, is simultaneously told what to instruct and what to be in this category. His father in the faith writes,

“Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.” (Titus 2:6-8)

Titus is in a unique position at this point in his life to model what a young man should be to other young men. Sensibility is the first command. Hastiness, explosions of wrath, and other immature behaviors are all condemned within this one word. Rather, a young man should be striving after truth and good deeds. May our young men take advantage of the strength of youth to learn leadership in the church.

Duties of All

“Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.” (Titus 3:14) Each of us has a part to play in doing good to others and rising up to meet any pressing needs that arise. We are a part of one another in the body of Christ; let us care for any suffering limb and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

Each of us has a part to play in the local church. Arise to the challenge and fill your role with excellence!

Duties of All

Why was Paul concerned about the attitude of bondservants toward their masters?
What lessons can we learn from that?

What are older women to teach the younger? Why do these things need to be taught?

What word does Paul use to describe how young men ought to be behave? How could Titus be especially impactful teaching this?

What must all Christians do?

Respecting Scripture

IN PREPARATION

2 Timothy 2

What was Timothy to do with the teachings?

What is the “trustworthy statement”?

What should Timothy avoid?

How do we make ourselves a vessel for honor?

Who is Timothy that the Christians should hear him? Why should they trust him to deliver God’s truth? The short answer is that it was never about Timothy. This young evangelist was merely put into place to deliver what God had delivered through the apostles and Scripture. Thus, it was very important that Timothy have a strong grasp of Scripture and a respect for those written words as God-breathed.

Source of Truth

Timothy was not to trust in his own wisdom as he sought to labor in the Lord’s vineyard. Rather, he was to constantly lean on the truth of God. But where is the truth found? For Timothy the answer was two fold, according to the apostle Paul. One source of truth was from the apostles themselves. Timothy was commanded, “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 1:13) Paul’s words were a “standard” that Timothy must “retain.” It was not the prerogative of the evangelist to dismiss the apostles’ commands and do something different. Timothy had no authority to disregard the Lord. Paul reiterates this idea, “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them...” (2 Timothy 3:14) Knowing that an apostle had taught the truth to him he should be all the more steadfast.

The apostles were teaching the will of God has had been divinely delivered to them through the Spirit. The Spirit had also inspired all Scripture and, therefore, Scripture is the other source of truth for Timothy. Paul says,

“from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Respecting Scripture

How is it that Scripture gives all that a person needs to be spiritually equipped, yet the apostles words were necessary as a standard? The answer is simple; the apostles were writing Scripture! Peter called on the Christians to look to the same two sources of truth in his teaching as well. That apostle writes,

“This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.” (2 Peter 3:1-2)

By dutifully studying the teachings of the apostles and “inspired” Scripture these evangelists could know the complete truth of God for mankind!

Upholding Truth

Timothy knew the source of truth, but now he responsible for upholding that truth in the Lord’s church at Ephesus. He was told,

“I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

There is a proper way to conduct ourselves in the church, especially keeping in mind that the church is the “pillar and support of the truth” in each community where it resides. It should be noted that Paul is not referring to a physical building. In other words, this is not an instruction telling children not to play in the church’s building. Rather, the behavior in the church refers to the appointing of leaders, setting an example, teaching the truth, and spreading the gospel. The local church exists so that people in every area can have easy access to God’s plan and God’s people. Timothy was charged with upholding the truth so that the things being done in the church were indeed the things taught by Christ. He is charged to, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15) The organization matters because Christ has organized the church. The doctrine matters because Christ has delivered the doctrine through the Spirit. Our behavior matters because Christ has shown us how to live. We should also strive to uphold the truth in our local work!

Respecting Scripture

Principles for Us

We need reminders to respect Scripture just as much, if not more-so, than Timothy needed them. We must always remember that the apostles were writing scripture. (Ephesians 3:1-5, 2 Peter 1:19-21) They expected their words to remain and continue to guide the church because, in fact, they are the Spirit's words.

Timothy and Titus received the letters they were sent as Scripture. They did not believe they had the authority to ignore or alter the commands given to them. Do we? Restrictions were placed on the manner in which the churches were to be organized, how they were to spend their funds, their worship, their teachings, and the manner of living for all Christians. Yet, today each of these areas of instruction are completely disregarded by the religious world as a whole. We should not be so haughty as to believe ourselves to have more liberty to alter the church's pattern than these two evangelists who were spiritual children of the apostle.

We must always seek to not fall short or go beyond the teachings of Scripture. In whatever we do, let us always seek to retain the standard of sound words as it was originally delivered!

Respecting Scripture



What were to be the two sources of truth for Timothy? What are our sources of truth, then, today?

What is the “conduct” within the church that Paul refers to?

Did Timothy and Titus have the authority to disregard the teachings of the apostle Paul? Do we?

In what areas do most churches ignore the divine restrictions found in the evangelists’ epistles today?

Paul's Final Words

IN PREPARATION

2 Timothy 3-4

Who opposed
Moses?

What will happen to
all who live godly
in Christ?

What time will
come?

What is laid up for
Paul?

The particular thoughts Paul wishes to express at the end of each of the evangelists' epistles is very telling. In these words he gives glimpses into his greatest concerns for the churches and his joy to be laboring for the Lord. In this lesson we will focus on some of the final statements within these letters and seek to apply the wisdom imparted by Paul to ourselves.

Closing 1 Timothy

Most likely writing from Macedonia, Paul prepares to end this letter with instruction for Timothy regarding his own faith. He speaks of the wealth of some of the brethren and the lust for money that drives so many mad. Having condemned those things, he commands Timothy,

“But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called... I charge you in the presence of God... that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time... To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:11-16)

Our work, just like Timothy's, can be a fight at times. We are fighting against our own spiritual struggles, false teachers, and materialism. Paul reminds Timothy that we labor “in the presence of God” and will be held to account by Him. If we are faithful He will reward us upon the Lord's return. Keep the goal in sight!

“O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’ — which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.” (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

As was mentioned in a former lesson, that which “is falsely called ‘knowledge’” refers to Gnosticism, a false teaching that was gaining

Paul's Final Words



a foothold in the church. The letter of 1 Timothy ends with a reminder to avoid this heresy. We also must avoid the various false teachings that pull so many from the faith.

Closing Titus

Titus had a task to set the churches of Crete in order, but he needed to do this work in a timely manner. Paul prepares to end his letter to Titus with a reminder of that fact. He writes, “When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.” (Titus 3:12) There were things that needed to be done. Souls needed saving! Titus’ must conclude his work so that he can meet Timothy at Nicopolis, and from this place it is likely that they traveled to preach the gospel in Spain. We can learn from Paul’s haste; there is always more work to be done! e all need rest from time to time, but let us ensure that our rest is temporary because our labor for the Lord must continue.

The final words to Titus concern relationships: “All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.” (Titus 3:15) Those with Paul love Titus. Those with Titus love Paul and his companions. We are reminded of the bond of fellowship that transcends time and space which Christians share. We are blessed to be part of this spiritual nation!

Closing 2 Timothy

The letter of 2 Timothy is unique from the others in that these words are likely the last words Paul would ever write. With his sentencing approaching and Paul’s confidence in his impending execution, the words written in this letter to Timothy are heavy with emotion and love. Nearing the end of the letter, this spiritual father to Timothy explains his situation:

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

It is not with fear and trembling that Paul prepares to leave this life, but rather with

Paul's Final Words

confidence and hope. His work testifies for itself as, even 2,000 years later, we are still reading and reflecting upon the gospel as preached by Paul. Truly, these words from Paul must have been a great comfort to Timothy. May we live our lives in such a way that others can see that our work also testifies for itself.

Even when standing alone before the emperor and earthly judges, Paul was sure that he had lived and preached the truth. He recounts his testimony before these rulers remembering,

“the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (2 Timothy 4:17-18)

We serve the only living God. What can man do to us? Our God is perfectly capable of bringing us “safely to His heavenly kingdom.” Are you living with a faith that ensures your warm reception by the Maker? When our time comes to depart from this life let us sing our own death song and look forward to the Lord’s eternal rescue of our souls.

Paul's Final Words

What was Timothy to flee from? What should he pursue?

What false teaching was on the mind of Paul when ending 1 Timothy? What lessons can we learn from his warnings?

Was there a timeline placed on Titus' work in Crete? If so, why?

Explain Paul's demeanor when approaching his own death. What words of Paul's impact you the most?
