

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 36 – February 6th – February

Read on Your Own this Week:

Psalm 106-108

Matthew 21-24

Readings in Class:

1 Timothy 1-6

Isaiah 1-12

Introduction to 1 Timothy

This letter is a letter written to a specific individual, but with the goal of having others listen in. Paul is writing to what he calls his “son in the faith.” Timothy has journeyed and traveled with Paul. We meet him in the book of Acts, and over half of Paul’s letters have Timothy as a coauthor (6 letters, besides these two written to him).

1 Timothy, along with 2 Timothy and Titus, are known as the Pastoral Epistles. Paul has some words of advice and encouragement for Timothy on how he should conduct himself as a leader of the church and how he should pick those who will be leaders after him in the churches. The pastoral tone and care he has for Timothy, as well as the guidance he has for how churches manage and live their lives have been of great use in the Church for leadership throughout her life.

These are also the last of Paul’s letters. 1 Timothy is most likely written in 65 AD, with Paul’s death just a couple of years away. This becomes apparent as these letters have a sense of urgency in Paul’s tone for what he is soon expecting to happen to him and as he desires to finish the work that Jesus has given him.

A Brief Summary of 1 Timothy

1. The Pure Gospel 1:1-20
 - a. Greeting 1:1-2
 - b. The Task at Hand 1:3-11
 - c. The Power of the Gospel 1:12-17
 - d. Those who oppose the Gospel 1:18-20
2. The Church’s Organization 2:1-3:16
 - a. Good order in the Church 2:1-15
 - b. Qualifications for Church Leadership 3:1-16
3. True Teaching versus False Teaching 4:1-16
 - a. Doctrines of Demons 4:1-5
 - b. True Godliness 4:6-10
 - c. Paul’s Charge to Timothy 4:11-16
4. Exhortation to Christian Living 5:1-6:21
 - a. Positions in the Church 5:1-6:2
 - b. True Godliness 6:3-21

Pastors/Leaders in the Church

The main part that Paul wants Timothy to focus on is the calling and charge that He has received from God. Throughout much of the letter, Paul cautions Timothy about people who are trying to deceive others and warns him as a pastor of the flock that his job is not just to give good instruction, but refute and rebuke false teachers and leaders. Being a pastor is no easy task, and one that involves watching oneself, tending the flock, and fighting off wolves.

So Paul gives instructions for who leaders should be in the church. The Bible never gives instructions for how leaders should be made but the Bible does give a lot of info for who the leaders should be. They are to be faithful men, full of integrity, and zeal for the Gospel.

The main controversy in Paul's letter stems from chapter 2. Paul discusses the roles of men and women in the congregation. Paul references the need to honor the creative differences that God has made between men and women and the roles that they reflect in God's creation. So men do not cover their head while they pray, and women do not hold teaching authority over men. This has created a lot of discussion over women in the church and what is their place, especially not serving as pastors. Paul notes that following this order is not diminishment for women but rather elevates their distinct and necessary place within the order that God has made.

The Life of Churches

We can see from Paul's notes to Timothy that much of the pastor's job is to conduct the life of the congregation which they serve. Life within the congregation is to be filled with God's Word and living in conformity within it. Much of the threat to the congregation comes from false brothers and false teachers who will desire to hear only what they want to hear and so wander from the truth.

With Timothy being a younger man, Paul directs him to take courage in the office that he has been charged with keeping. Paul expects order, good works, and instruction to be done by Timothy, and also by extension, the members of the Church itself. It is not a free for all and each with their own direction to go. But together they are called to deal with each other, forgive one another, and keep in step with each other as they confess the same truth and doctrine in Jesus Christ.