

# Mid Week • 1 Timothy 1

## INTRODUCTION

Our usual pattern for study in the Bible is to study 1 NT book, then 2 OT books.

We're going to deviate from that pattern and cover 2 NT books.

The reason we're doing this is because we've just covered 2 Thessalonians in only a week and a half, while we've spent over 12 weeks in Daniel before that.

It seemed proper to stay in the NT a little longer – and specially since the next book for us to study is Paul's first letter to Timothy.

### ***Purpose For The Letter***

This is an especially good time to study this book in light of why Paul said he wrote this letter, in 3:14 & 15

<sup>14</sup>**These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; <sup>15</sup>but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus, are called the *pastoral epistles* because Paul writes them to two young pastors.

Timothy was in Ephesus; Titus was on the isle of Crete, leading the church there.

These letters, give both men guidance in how to pastor their congregations.

In light of all the confusion today on what the church is and ought to be, what we find here is highly enlightening.

We'll be seeing a good job description for pastors and elders.

But the greatest value of this letter is that it will help us understand the vital role God intends the Church to play in what He is doing in the world.

Turn to Ephesians 3:8-11 . . .

<sup>8</sup> **To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,**

<sup>9</sup> **and to make all see what is the FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;**

<sup>10</sup> **to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,**

<sup>11</sup> **according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,**

I admit that what Paul says here is rather challenging to understand; he uses rather complex terminology here because what he's saying is so deep and far-reaching.

In essence what he's saying in Ephesians 3 is that he had been given a special task of making known what up till then was a mystery.

That mystery was that God's multi-faceted wisdom was being made *known and visible* by, in, and through the Church.

In other words, as Jews and Gentiles came to faith in Christ, God was creating a brand new humanity that bore His likeness and lived in fellowship with Him.

1 Timothy is a letter on how the church should operate so as to ***reveal the mystery*** of God's love and truth to, not only the world, but the spiritual realm as well.

The angelic and demonic hosts are seeing the love and redemptive plan of God realized as the Spirit of God works through the Body of Christ.

Stop and think about that for a moment – From the quality of our lives, all the way down to something as specific as the way we organize and structure the ministry of our local church should be reflective of the holiness of God.

Therefore, in this letter, we find specific instructions for Timothy as a leader and pastor, and for the church in general.

We'll see that as we study through these 6 chapters

## **BACKGROUND**

Some of the details in this letter *do not fit* the chronology we find for Paul's life in the book of Acts.

For that reason, many have concluded that Acts doesn't end with Paul's final imprisonment and execution in Rome

Indeed, nothing is mentioned in Acts about Paul's death, which you think it would have if it had occurred at that time.

According to the writings of some of the early Church Fathers, Paul was released after just a couple years of prison in Rome.

As we read the last chapters in Acts we see the Roman officials in Caesarea had a hard time *justifying* keeping Paul in prison.

The Jewish authorities who had charged Paul seemed content to let him rot in prison rather than press for a specific sentence and judgment.

When Paul appealed to Caesar, according to Roman law, he had to go to Rome for his case to be tried, and that meant that the Jewish authorities would have to make the long trip as well so they could repeat their charges before the emperor.

There's no mention that they ever did so – so it's more than likely that when the day came for Paul's trial and his opponents didn't show, his case was thrown out and he was released.

In the letters he wrote from prison, we find an expectation on his part that he would be released soon and once again be able to visit those churches he was writing to.

More than likely, he was released, visited the churches and then made one final missions trip to Spain as he told the Romans he was hoping to.

Finally, back in Rome, Paul got caught in the persecution that arose under Nero and was one of those leaders of the Church the tyrant seemed to delight in torturing and executing.

These 3 letters, 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus are some of the last letters Paul wrote.

1 Timothy and Titus were written at about the same time.

And 2 Timothy was written as Paul's sentence had been passed and he was awaiting execution.

## **CHAPTER 1**

<sup>1</sup>**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,**

<sup>2</sup>**To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Paul begins with his typical greeting, naming himself as the author

But what seems a bit unusual is that if this is a *personal* letter to Timothy, who was such a close friend of Paul's, why the almost *stiff* formality at the beginning?

While this was a personal letter to Timothy, he knew that it would also be shared with the entire congregation there in Ephesians and so it was important he identify himself and his office.

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ!

And his calling to be an apostle wasn't something he had chosen for himself – he was chosen ***FOR*** it by God.

In fact, when God appeared to Paul on the Road to Damascus it wasn't to *plead* with Paul to give his life to Christ.

It was to confront him with his error and *demand* his repentance and faith.

Then, God *commanded* Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

Note how Paul calls God, "our Savior" in v. 1.

Some people get the idea that God the Father is angry with sinners and just waiting to snuff them out, but Jesus intervenes and stays His wrath.

This is a false conception of God.

God is our Savior – all three members of the Trinity long for and are engaged in saving the lost.

The letter is addressed to Timothy who Paul calls his “**true son in the faith.**”

Timothy lived in the city of Lystra in the region of Galatia

In Acts 14 we read how Paul had visited the city of Lystra on his first missionary journey and planted a church there.

On his return trip in Acts 16 we read about how the church in Lystra recommended young Timothy to him and Paul realized he would make a great addition to his team.

Timothy’s father was a Gentile and his mother Eunice, a Jewish believer.

From his youth, he had been taught the OT scriptures by both his mother and grandmother, Lois.

It was clear to the disciples there in Lystra that Timothy, though just a young man, was appointed to great things for the kingdom and Paul recognized the potential.

When Lynn and I first visited the area here from our home in the Bay area, we came down on a weekend and visited the Calvary Chapel in Ventura.

They had no building but met at Seaside Park.

There was about a dozen and a half of us, and it was a nice service there on the grass.

After the service was over we hung around for a while and met some people.

Jeff & Cindy Brown were very friendly and greeted us, asking questions about us and telling us about the church.

They told us of a young man, only 18 years old, who had just left to go to the CC Bible school up at Twin Peaks.

They said that although he was a young guy, he was a dynamic teacher and they looked forward to his return so he could once again bless them with his obvious gift and the new insights he would have after going to school.

His name was David Guzik.

Little did either the Browns, the Ralston, or David realize what would later happen in the birth of CCO.

But truly, even though David was only a teenager – his gift and calling to teach were obvious, and the Browns recognized the Lord had much in store for him.

David & I merged our separate home bible studies and started CCO in September of 1982.

And of course, today, David is the pastor of CC Simi Valley – and being used of the Lord far and wide to bless the Body of Christ.

Timothy had been led to faith through Paul’s ministry there in Lystra, had then grown rapidly in the things of the faith and when Paul took him under his wing, he became the great apostle’s protégé.

Paul then gives his customary greeting of grace and peace but to it he adds “mercy.”

What’s remarkable about this is that he repeats this exact greeting in all three Pastoral epistles – but nowhere else!

Maybe Paul added mercy to the greeting because he knew pastors need an *extra measure* of it.

**<sup>3</sup>As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,**

This verse is one of the reasons why we’re moved to conclude Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome.

There is simply no place in Acts for us to see a time when Paul left Timothy in Ephesus while he traveled west into Macedonia.

It seems that some time after his release from prison, Paul returned to Ephesus and found that it had become a focal point of false teaching.

Paul had prophesied this very thing in Acts 20.

While on his return trip to Jerusalem at the end of his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey, he’d stopped along the coast

not far from Ephesus and called for the elders to meet with him.  
When they arrived, he gave them a solemn charge and warning.  
In vs. 29 & 30 he said . . .

**<sup>29</sup>For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. <sup>30</sup>Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.**

His premonitions had proven true and when he returned he found it a hot-bed of false teaching.

For some reason, he had to leave Ephesus and go in to Macedonia, but left Timothy behind to carry on his work of correction and right teaching.

Imagine how *incredibly intimidating* that would be for Tim.

On one hand, he has to fill the Apostle Paul's sandals!

And on the other hand, he has to take an authoritative position in refuting a whole battery of false teachers and their faulty teaching.

No wonder Timothy appears to be a bit shy, retiring and intimidated.

Paul is constantly encouraging him to be strong and to speak up!

Again, he writes in v. 3 . . .

**<sup>3</sup>As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,**

**<sup>4</sup>nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.**

Note carefully the words Paul used in v. 3.

He “urged” Tim to stay in Ephesus and do battle with false teaching and teachers.

Why? Because this was a *tough* job, and one Timothy was tempted to run from.

Some of you know Slava – he's the young man we supported in Vladivostok, Russia for several years.

He was my Timothy – a man uniquely gifted to teach and lead the flock of God there at CCV.

But like Timothy, Slava is meek and tends toward discouragement in the face of opposition.

When life and ministry got tough in Vlad, he cashed out his savings and took off for Europe.

Now he's in Czechoslovakia, seemingly repentant and trying to get back home.

Before Slava fled Vlad, I sent many e-mails of encouragement telling him to remain in Vlad and fight the good fight.

Many people think the task of church leadership is a *glamorous one*!

Some are envious of the *attention* pastors get.

They think of the role of *leadership* as equivalent to the status of *celebrity*.

Some people desire power and see the pastorate as something to seek after so they can accumulate personal power and so affirm their individual worth.

Such people need to look carefully at the life of the Apostle Paul.

Here was a man, one of only 12 in all history, who formed the foundation of the Christian Church.

Here was a man, chosen, commanded and empowered by God with authority the likes of which have not been seen since.

But how did he exercise his authority and power?

Always and only to the benefit of others.

His life was one of *hardship* and *trial*, not *privilege* and *celebrity*.

Tim had lived and ministered with Paul for several years and now that he was being put in a position of solo-leadership, he knew it was time to do on his own what had been modeled for him by his mentor.

The task of a pastor, if he follows the Lord's direction, is often difficult.

Of course, if he's called by God, then he's also empowered and equipped by God.

I can think of no greater privilege in all the world than to pastor the flock of God.

But it is a demanding task and one that will result in greater scrutiny on the day of judgment- as James

says in 3:1 . . .

**My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

No one should aspire to be a pastor apart from the call of God.

Paul was called – Timothy was called – and here Paul tells Timothy not to run from his call.

What was Tim to remain in Ephesus and do?

He was to charge those who were getting off track that they were to teach *no other doctrine* but that which had been delivered to them by the Apostles!

DOCTRINE – that’s a painful word to many Christians today.

When they hear it they think of dry, boring lectures from shriveled old men.

There’s reluctance in the church today to *teach* doctrine.

That’s for the academics and seminary students – but not for the average person in the pew, or now, in the soft padded chair.

I hope doctrine *is* important to you.

If it is, then you’re one of a *very small minority* in the modern church.

Most Christians today are far more concerned with *relevance* than doctrine.

Without even being aware of it they’ve been co-opted by the idea so prevalent today that truth is *not an absolute* but is determined by the moment and whatever works.

It doesn’t matter if it’s true in an absolute sense; what’s more important is; is it true for *you*?

Does it work for you, is it relevant? If it is – then it’s true for you, and that’s all that matters.

The Christian Church will remain weak and ineffective, following the world blindly down the primrose path to destruction until it wakes up and shakes itself loose from the *relativism* of this age and cleaves once again to The Unchanging Truth of God.

There are 32 references to “doctrine,” and “teaching” in the 3 Pastoral Epistles.

In the early church, believers were taught the Word of God and the meanings of basic Christian doctrines.

In the modern church, it seems the teaching ministry has been traded in for entertainment.

Timothy’s job as pastor was to charge those that were getting off track to get back on track and stay centered on the truths handed them by the Apostles.

That word “charge” is a military word meaning “to give strict orders from a superior officer.” Paul used this word 8 times in his two letters to Timothy.

In v. 4, Paul mentions how the false teachers were getting off track.

They were giving heed to fables and endless genealogies.

Several ancient Jewish texts have come down to us from this time so we know something of what this refers to.

Elaborate genealogies and family trees of the Jewish patriarchs and people mentioned in the OT were all the rage in some circles.

Attached to these genealogies were fanciful stories about the people listed there.

An entire body of fables and myths sprung up around Abraham and Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and his 12 sons.

There were fables about Rachel and Rebekah and Bilhah and Zilpah.

If there was someone mentioned in the OT, there was a family tree and stories attached to each twig!

The problem is that people were getting so excited about reading and hearing all these stories, they were spending far more time on that than studying the scriptures.

When I read v. 4, I immediately think of my years watching what is called Christian TV.

Far more than hearing solid bible teaching, what I heard was story after story of this or that celebrity who had had some incredible encounter with God.

There were stories about people who had died and gone to heaven, or hell, and came back.

There were stories about conversations with Jesus or one of the angels.

There were stories about voices and visions and this and that.

But all too often, things would be shared in these stories that would raise questions, and in answering those questions, the answers would only raise other questions.

Soon elaborate myths and fables were weaved, which only served to raise more questions as things became more and more bizarre!

Paul told Timothy to command all this story telling and mythical fabrication to halt and get back to the tried and true doctrines of the faith.

Stories don't edify people in the faith – they only lead to contention.

Truth edifies because it is spiritual meat.

Stories are nothing but sugary frosting.

**<sup>5</sup>Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,**

The commandment Paul refers to here is the instruction he's just given Timothy.

Fables and endless genealogies don't cultivate love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. Paul understood that the ultimate fruit of solid doctrinal teaching is agape love.

If there is one thing that we can look for in a person's life to know whether or not they are truly going forward into spiritual maturity it is love – agape love; the kind of love that seeks the highest good for the one loved with not thought of what one is going to get in return.

Such love, can only come from a pure heart, a single heart, one undiluted by selfishness and sin.

Such love can only come from a conscience unstained by ulterior motives.

And such love can only come from a faith that is real and unfeigned.

Don't miss this, because it's critical: Paul knew that false teaching hinders this kind of spiritual maturity while only the faithful teaching of the truths of the Christian Faith advance it.

In Ephesus . . .

**<sup>6</sup>from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk,**

**<sup>7</sup>desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.**

The church has always struggled with the problem of legalism, and we see it here in Ephesus.

There were those who, once they had become Christians and began studying the OT scriptures, thought they found in the law a way in which they could rise to a higher level of spirituality.

As we read on in 1 Timothy we discover there was a group who were calling for a strict adherence to the law and were actually taking things farther than even the law proscribed.

This is always the way it is with legalism – it goes beyond the law to become it's own rule.

The legalist isn't content to define a way to God. He has to make it an *exclusive* way to God, that only he or she can walk and everyone else is excluded.

The legalists in Ephesus claimed to have a corner on the law, but Paul says here they didn't understand it at all.

**<sup>8</sup>But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully,**

**<sup>9</sup>knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,**

**<sup>10</sup>for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,**

**<sup>11</sup>according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.**

Paul is clear here.

The legalists thought the law was for who? For them – the ones keeping it!

They saw it as the road to God, the path to His presence.

They saw that it was like guard rails along the edges of the road that hemmed them in and kept them in the right place.

Paul shoots this idea down.

The law isn't for the righteous but for the unrighteous – and he gives a list here of all those who fall in that

category.

He starts with a broad brush and says it's for all law-breakers and rebels.

Then he gets specific and names precise sins.

His point is that the law was sent to identify SIN, not righteousness!

Sin is revealed as sin because it's a violation of the law.

Rather than the law being the guard-rails along the road to God, the law is a huge roadblock barring access to God!

As Paul says in Galatians – the law is a tutor, meant to reveal our sin and so bring us to Christ as Savior.

In v. 8, Paul says there *is* a rightful use of the law.

Just as God gave the Law to Israel through Moses so that the people might realize their sin and seek salvation outside themselves in the substitution of the sacrifices –

So the purpose of the law remains to reveal the need of sinners for the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the final payment for our sins.

We do a disservice to people today when all we talk about is the love of God and how God wants to bless them.

Christianity isn't just about a healthy marriage and a happy home.

It's more than just how to be successful and prosperous in business.

It's far more than learning how to accept yourself and affirm your inner child.

First and foremost, **the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to our trust** is the message that we, who apart from Christ are hell-bent sinners destined for eternal torment, have been saved by grace alone through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

So, we ought to use a healthy dose of the law in our evangelism.

People need to realize they are sinners – and the law is the backdrop against which that truth is revealed.

Paul now reflects back on how the law condemned him but how he found hope and life through the gospel . . .

**<sup>12</sup>And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,**

By the way – that's the only way a person can be a pastor; he has to be PUT there by the Lord.

Going to seminary does not a pastor make.

Getting an Masters of Divinity degree from Bible college does not qualify.

God does not look at the graduating class of Dallas Seminary or even Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa's Ministry School and say, "Oh my – look at all the new pastors!"

One does not EARN the pastorate – he is *put* there by the Lord.

And if *put* there, then as Paul says, he is also enabled by God to fulfill his duties.

But when Paul considers his background at the time of his calling, he is blown away by the mercy and grace of God . . .

**<sup>13</sup>although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.**

**<sup>14</sup>And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.**

Paul reflects on his career prior to his conversion.

As a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, he had been the point man for persecution of Christians.

Paul was the official who gave authority to those who stoned Stephen.

Paul led the campaign against the Church in Jerusalem and once the leaders had been driven in to hiding, he received permission to carry his campaign of terror to the city of Damascus where he had heard the new movement was thriving.

Prior to his conversion, Paul was a zealous Jew who saw Christianity as a dangerous threat to his religion and way of life.

It was ought of an uniformed and misplaced zeal for God that he persecuted the followers of Christ.

Remember that both Jesus and Stephen, just prior to their deaths prayed and said, "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing."

It seems that in Paul's case, that prayer was answered and Paul was converted.

If God can forgive Paul for his past of murder, violent opposition to Christ, and blasphemy, and turn him in to someone like the Apostle Paul – there is hope for every person in this room tonight!

No matter what you've done – no matter how far you've gone in sin; God can and will forgive you if you turn to Him in sincere repentance.

And just as God put Paul into the ministry, He can take your broken life and turn it into something beautiful.

God will put you into the ministry too!

You see, the word ministry simply means "service" and all Christians are ministers because we are all called to serve.

Most Christians see whatever service they do for God as a "volunteer" thing.

But Christians aren't *volunteers*; they're *slaves*.

They are duty-bound servants of Jesus, and only one thing is expected of a servant = faithfulness!

You don't have to be smart to be faithful; you don't have to be talented or gifted.

Faithful is something every one of us can be in the sphere God has given us to serve in.

Some of us are *waiting* to be faithful.

We tell ourselves, "I'll be faithful when I'm in such and such a position."

That's nonsense. We should be faithful right where we are at - our faithfulness is shown in the small things.

And as we're faithful with the small things here and now, then God rewards with greater things later.

**15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.**

These words are written in a manner that reveals Paul's own wonder and awe at what they say!

This is a staggering truth, and one worthy of memorization and the deepest kind of meditation and reflection.

In fact, this is what we'll do on Sunday morning, December 24<sup>th</sup> – this will be our text and I will leave till then.

**16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.**

As I said before, if God can save a blaspheming murderer like Paul, and then put him in the office of Apostle to the Gentiles, there is no one beyond His power to save and transform.

I received Christ when I was 11 years old at Fullerton First Baptist Church, under the ministry of Pastor Emory Campbell - a truly godly man!

But I backslid horribly in my teens years and got in to drugs and the party life.

Sex, drugs, and rock-&-roll were my entire lifestyle.

I was a degenerate reprobate and lived a life of horrible blasphemy via the music I listened to and sang along with – The Tubes, Black Sabbath, Jethro Tull and such.

I even participated in murder, in that I drove my girlfriend to the clinic so she could abort the child we had conceived.

The entire time I was living that lifestyle, I knew what I was doing was dead wrong – but I pressed on anyway!

Paul did what he did in ignorance and misplaced zeal for God – I did what I did in full knowledge of what I was doing but in zeal for sin.

So I can relate to what Paul says in these verses.

Jesus saved me apart from any merit on my part.

I deserved one thing – God's everlasting wrath and punishment.

But in His mercy, He not only saved me, cleansed and forgave me my blasphemy and murder, He put me in the ministry and enabled me to be faithful to Him.

I bring Him nothing but brokenness and a wasted life – He takes it and turns it into something useful – it's



all about Him and none about me!

Paul's meditation on the grace and mercy of God fills him with such wonder and awe that it overflows now in a peel of praise and worship . . .

**17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Isn't this what every genuine child of God does?

When we remember that our salvation is solely the result of God's mercy and grace, it brings up from the core of our being a spontaneous expression of rejoicing and praise.

Friends, none of us here tonight is here because of our own goodness or merit.

There isn't a person here tonight who has earned favor with God or deserves heaven.

Every one of else deserve nothing more than to burn in hell forever.

But because of God's great love – and because of Jesus Christ – we are saved!

Tell me, what would be your attitude toward the man who visited you while you were locked up in a debtor's prison because you couldn't pay your bills totaling \$500,000?

And this man, opened the door to your cell, and handed you a suitcase with \$10 million in it and said it was all yours, absolutely free?

You know very well that the sudden release from a seemingly impossible situation, and then the over the top blessing of a suitcase full of cash would rock you back on your heels and make you light headed.

You'd fall on your knees, pouring out thanks and appreciation and abasing yourself in any and every manner possible to let that man know just how grateful you are.

You don't do all that to get the money – you've already got it!

No, you do it to express your most profound thanks!

God came to us in the debtor's prison of sin and death and unlocked the door.

Then he handed us a suitcase with a slip of paper in it worth far more than \$10 million.

On that slip of paper are 2 word – "Jesus Christ"

And He says to us, whatsoever things you ask in that name, I will do!

When you and I gather here to worship God, we ought to give expression to the appreciation and gratitude that comes from a heart set free and fired with purpose.

**18 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,**

The word "charge" here is the same as in v. 3 where Paul told Timothy to charge the false teachers not to teach any other doctrine.

Now Paul is charging *Timothy*.

The command is to wage the good warfare – to fight the good fight.

To that end, Paul reminds Tim of the times in the past when the Lord had given a specific word to the young man about his life and ministry.

There were times when men and women, recognized by the Church as prophets, had confirmed Timothy's call and that he had a role to play in building up the church.

Paul reminds him of these prophecies.

Paul had spent much time with Timothy and knew his bent toward timidity.

Taking the helm in troubled Ephesus would be a challenge – so Paul affirms him with a reminder of the Lord's favor and blessing.

Friends, the gift of prophecy is still at work in the Church today and we ought not think it strange that the Lord would have specific direction and counsel for His people in every age.

We regularly see the word of prophecy shared here at Calvary.

We just don't make a big to do of it and focus a spot light on it.

Rather, we expect it, and when it comes, it flows in an orderly and unpretentious manner.

Typically, the way prophecy is manifest here is when we are talking with someone in counseling or up front her

after service as we are praying for someone.

One of the prayer counselors will feel impressed from the Lord to share a word with the person they're praying with.

Then we invite people to return and give us a follow up on what they've prayed about.

Many times people will return and seek out the person that prayed for them and shared a word and find out that it was precisely the counsel or direction they needed.

What do you do if you're the one who receives a prophecy from someone?

As it says in 1 Corinthians 14:29, you test it to see if it's according to both the Word of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit in your own heart.

I've been a part of churches in the past which were in to what I refer to as charismania.

There were so-called prophets who would regularly give grandiose prophecies.

I don't know how many times I heard that this or that person was going to have a "powerful ministry and would lead more people to Christ than Billy Graham."

In some circles, it isn't unusual to hear someone being declared as greater than Paul, Peter, Moses, or Elijah."

These grandiose supposed words from the Lord are dangerous because who can speak against them when they are first given?

Anyone who doesn't go along with them is seen as a scoffer and certainly doesn't want to be found resisting the will and word of God.

Tom Stipe, in the foreword to *Counterfeit Revival*, speaks powerfully about this phenomenon, having been a leader in it before seeing how wrong it is:

After only a couple of years, the prophets seemed to be speaking to just about everyone on just about everything. Hundreds of . . . members received the 'gift' of prophecy and began plying their trade among both leaders and parishioners. People began carrying around little notebooks filled with predictions that had been delivered to them by the prophets and seers. They flocked to the prophecy conferences that had begun to spring up everywhere. The notebook crowd would rush forward in hopes of being selected to receive more prophecies to add to their prophetic diaries. . . .

Not long after 'prophecy du jour' became the primary source of direction, a trail of devastated believers began to line up outside our pastoral counseling offices. Young people promised teen success and stardom through prophecy were left picking up the pieces of their shattered hopes because God had apparently gone back on His promises. Leaders were deluged by angry church members who had received prophecies about the great ministries they would have but had been frustrated by local church leaders who failed to recognize and 'facilitate' their 'new anointing.'

After a steady diet of the prophetic, some people were rapidly becoming biblically illiterate, choosing a 'dial-a-prophet' style of Christian living rather than studying God's Word. Many were left to continually live from one prophetic 'fix' to the next, their hope always in danger of failing because God's voice was so specific in pronouncement, yet so elusive in fulfillment. Possessing a prophet's phone number was like having a storehouse of treasured guidance. Little clutched notebooks replaced Bibles as the preferred reading material during church services.

Prophecy is important, but it is not the central ministry of the Church.

The central ministry of the Church is to preach the gospel of Christ to the Lost and teach truth to the saved.

Prophecy comes alongside to build us up so we can do that task more effectively.

That's the way Paul uses prophecy here – he reminds Tim of past prophecies so he'll be encouraged in his task of teaching and preaching!

**<sup>19</sup>having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,**

Here's the equipment Tim will need if he's to fight the good fight and wage good warfare.

He'll need *faith* and a *good conscience*.

Faith answers the fiery darts of doubt the enemy loves to hurl at us continually.

While a good conscience protects us from the guilt the enemy tries to disqualify us with.

Even now, after 25 years of walking with Christ, I find that there are times when the thought crosses my mind,

“What if it's all a myth? What if it's all a colossal con and I've been suckered?”

I realize that thought for what it is – a doubt hurled at me from the enemy.

I've gotten to the point now where I don't even entertain it for a second but laugh it off.

I was a wrestler in high school.

There was on move I really liked – it was called a *duck under*, and I got really good at it.

At first, it was hard for me to get and took a lot of drilling.

But after a lot of times practicing it, I got to the point when someone grabbed my wrist in a match, before they could react, I was behind them and taking them to the mat.

Time and practice made the move quick.

Another move was the *sprawl* – it was a counter to a shot on your legs.

As soon as someone moved for your legs, the idea was to throw your lower body backward and drop to the mat, catching your opponent underneath you.

The movement was unusual and at first hard – but practice made it second nature so you could sprawl without thinking & it became reflexive if anyone moved toward your legs.

That's the way of it now when the enemy fires one of those blatant fiery darts of doubt – I meet it with faith – a faith that's built on the Word of God.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God – if you want to gain victory over doubt, then add some layers to your shield of faith by applying yourself to the study and application of God's Word.

By remaining *obedient* to the Lord, Timothy could also hold a clear conscience and when the enemy would try to harass him with condemnation and guilt, he could answer it with confidence.

When he did fail, he knew that by seeking the Lord in repentance and confession, he could be made clean.

Guilt doesn't stick to the one who's been washed by the cleansing blood of Christ

People involved in active ministry know how the enemy consistently attacks on these two levels – through doubt and condemnation.

He assails the mind and the heart.

So faith and a clean conscience are the best weapons we have.

But not all have these weapons – some have forsaken them and gone off into error.

They are casualties in the war and Paul says that concerning the Faith, their whole lives and ministries have been ruined, like a ship that's smashed itself against the rocks and been torn to bits by the pounding of the waves.

He names two such men that Timothy was acquainted with . . .

**<sup>20</sup>of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**

In 2 Timothy 2 we learn that Hymenaeus was teaching that the resurrection had already occurred.

Why he was teaching this we don't know – but as is usual for all false teachers, they twist the scriptures to support some teaching that promotes their own agenda and gain.

Doctrinal error usually is prompted by a moral decline.

A temptation isn't resisted but entertained.

Sin is conceived and the conscience is defiled.

Rather than repent, the truth that stimulates a proper sense of guilt is changed so its edge is blunted.

Then the pain of guilt is dulled.

How many people today, out of a desire to carry on an illicit affair, twist the prohibition against adultery by saying that was given to a society without the benefits of birth-control, or use some other lame excuse?

Scripture twisting and false teaching are usually prompted by a dirty conscience.

In 2 Timothy 4, Paul refers to Alexander as a metal-smith who had caused him much trouble there in Ephesus.

The point is that both these men had at one time been a part of the Church there in Ephesus, but because of a rejection of the faith and the loss of a good conscience, they had come to blaspheme the things they once praised.

They went so far in their apostasy that Paul had only one course left – to formally use his authority as an Apostle to withdraw the protection of Christian fellowship from them and turn them over to the devil.

The hope was that they would experience the fruit of their sin and so come to their senses and repent.

Paul gave the same instructions to the church at Corinth when there was a man among them who had grossly sinned and was non-compliant with their correction.

He told them to turn such a man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh and the salvation of his spirit.

There are those today who say that it's *unkind* to name false teachers and to hold up their teaching to the scrutiny of the scriptures.

They think that false teachers ought to just be left alone.

Actually, many Christians today, because they've come to accept the idea that there is no real objective and absolute truth, find it narrow and bigoted when someone dares call someone else a false prophet or teacher.

Apparently Paul was unaware of this supposed virtue!

He didn't hesitate to name those who were in error.

In fact, in Romans 16:17 he tells the church to *mark* those who teach heresy and shun them.

## CONCLUSION

Ch. 1 is a stirring exhortation to Timothy to stand his ground and boldly proclaim the truth of the glorious gospel of Christ.

He may be in the minority as a standard bearer of Truth – but he is in the Right and here Paul affirms his call and task.

You and I are called to be Timothy's in this age.

In this post-modern world with its rejection of Truth and its longing for relevance, we must take a bold stand and hold high the Cross of Christ.

Hugh Latimer, the foremost preacher of the English Reformation, was invited to preach at Hampton Court before King Henry VIII.

His message greatly offended the king so Latimer was told to re-appear the next Sunday and preach again, this time beginning with an apology.

Latimer began his message the next Sunday with this . . .

Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease; but then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest; upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God! Who is all present, and who beholdest all they ways, and who is able to cast they soul into hell! Therefore take care that thou deliver they message faithfully.

Latimer then preached the exact same sermon as the week before, only this time with greater energy and

conviction!

You and I are called to stand like Hugh Latimer.

The people before us may be hostile – but God is above us and smiles with favor as we stand for Him.

Philemon 22 and Philippians 1:25-26 and 2:24

(1 Tim. 1:3, 5, 18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17; 2 Tim. 4:1)

Guzik, David – From his online commentary on 1 Timothy

1 Cor. 5

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“Feed My Sheep”

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