

**THY
KINGDOM
COME**

**11. The Letters of Paul – Part 4
The Pastoral Epistles
1 & 2 Timothy, Titus**

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**A Teaching Commentary
of the New Testament**

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1. The Pastoral Epistles

1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are known as the “pastoral” epistles. They were written by Paul to two young pastors – Timothy and Titus. Most of Paul’s correspondence is written to a church, but these three (and Philemon) were written to individuals. They contain instructions pertinent to the church at large, but they also contain personal correspondence to these men.

Timothy was one of Paul’s closest companions. We first encounter him in Acts 16:1. Paul had just set out on his second missionary journey. In the city of Lystra he met Timothy. His mother was a Jewess and his father a Greek. He became a follower of Jesus and joined Paul in his travels. Other places we encounter him in Scripture include:

- Acts 17:14-15, on the second missionary journey, Paul left Silas and Timothy in Berea and then later from Athens sent for them to join him. In Acts 18:5, Silas and Timothy actually reunited with Paul, who was now in Corinth.
- In Acts 19:22, Paul was in Ephesus. He sent Timothy ahead to go on into Macedonia. He would meet them there. In Acts 20:4, he rejoined Timothy in Macedonia.
- Timothy is listed as one of the senders or signers of Romans, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. See Romans 16:21, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, and Philemon 1.
- In 1 Corinthians 4:17, Paul indicated that he was sending Timothy to Corinth to try to deal with the problems in that church. This is also indicated in 1 Corinthians 16:10.
- 2 Corinthians 1:19 indicates that Timothy preached in Corinth.
- Philippians 2:19 indicates that Paul intended to send Timothy to minister to the Philippian church. In Philippians 2:22 he commends Timothy’s ministry to them.
- 1 Thessalonians 3:2-6 indicates that Paul sent Timothy to minister to that church.
- Hebrews 13:23 indicates that Timothy has been released – probably from prison.

Timothy was a faithful and loyal companion to Paul. Paul trusted him to minister to the churches that Paul had founded. Perhaps more than anyone Timothy was Paul’s son in the faith. The advice and concern that he shared with Timothy have never lost their value and their meaning.

Less is known of Titus than of Timothy. He is not mentioned at all in the book of Acts. The earliest historical reference to him is in Galatians 2:1-3:

Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

Titus was a Greek convert. Paul used him as an example of someone that the Judaizers would not force into circumcision. Titus is mentioned quite a bit in 2 Corinthians. Recall that Paul sent Titus to Corinth with the “severe letter.” Titus had returned with news that the conflicts in Corinth were beginning to turn around. Paul later sent him to Corinth to collect the money that had been collected for the church in Jerusalem. There is a single reference to him in the book of 2 Timothy. We learn in the book of Titus that Paul had sent him to Crete to pastor the church there. He needed the same sort of advice and encouragement that Timothy needed in his pastoral role. There is much similarity between Titus and 1 Timothy.

2. First Timothy

1 Timothy 1:3 says, “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus...” Timothy was in Ephesus when Paul wrote this letter. This does not coincide with any itinerary in Acts. In the third missionary journey, Paul left Ephesus and went to Macedonia, but the text says that Timothy accompanied him (Acts 20:4). More than likely, this letter was written after the events of Acts 28. This has some important implications for understanding the events of Paul’s life.

If this was written after the events of Acts 28, then it means that Paul was indeed ultimately freed from his Roman imprisonment. Extrabiblical evidence supports this view. If so, Paul probably made a fourth missionary journey, not recorded in Acts. We know from Romans that he intended to visit Spain after he went to Rome. Perhaps he was able to satisfy that ambition. Along that journey, he must have passed through Ephesus, left Timothy behind to pastor the church, and then headed to Macedonia. The purpose of the letter was to fortify and encourage Timothy and to give him instructions for his pastoral role.

2.1 Greeting

1 Timothy 1:1-2

The short introduction in the letter indicates that it is from Paul to “Timothy, my true son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2). This certainly describes the relationship between these two men. Paul loved Timothy like a son. The name “Timothy” means “honoring God” (in Greek it is actually Timotheos, a combination of “timaos,” meaning “to value or honor,” and “theos,” which is Greek for “God.”) Timothy honored God and honored Paul as well by the way he lived his life.

2.2 Affirm the Faith

1 Timothy 1:3-2:8

Paul immediately began to discuss doctrinal problems that existed in the Ephesian church. The letter does not give us a great deal of specific information that would allow us to identify the nature of the heresy. Some have suggested that it was an early form of Gnosticism¹, but that is conjecture (it could well be accurate) that cannot be fully substantiated from the text of the letter. The false teaching also seems to be infused with a misapplication of Jewish law.

Paul makes specific references to:

- False doctrines. (1 Timothy 1:3)
- Myths and endless genealogies. We are unsure what “endless genealogies” means. More than likely some were trying to authenticate their teachings by manufacturing genealogies linking them as descendants of Moses, David, or whoever. (1 Timothy 1:4)
- Teachings that promote controversy rather than God’s work. (1 Timothy 1:4)
- Those who have wandered away from teachings that promote love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. Instead they offer meaningless talk. (1 Timothy 1:5-6)

¹ Gnosticism is a teaching that says the spirit/mind is good and that matter (including the body) is evil. Salvation is achieved by special knowledge, which allows the mind (good) to overcome matter (evil). See the introduction to Colossians for more information.

- People who try to present themselves as teachers of the law but have no idea what the law is all about. (1 Timothy 1:7)

Some seem to be taking the Old Testament law, twisting it to suit their own purposes, and presenting it as a challenge to the Gospel. As he has taught in other letters, Paul affirms that the law is useful in showing people God's standards and their need for salvation. It leads people to the Gospel. It is not contrary to the Gospel.

The law convicts people of sin. 1 Timothy 1:15-16 says:

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

Paul had a history of persecuting the church. He was God's perfect example of how one could be redeemed and forgiven. The law led him to Christ.

Timothy should be firm in countering those who teach that the law contradicts the Gospel.

He also encourages Timothy to lead the church in intercessory prayer. He specifically encourages them to pray for governmental figures so that the church might live in peace. With that peace, the church can focus on its task of sharing the truth of the Gospel. 1 Timothy 2:3-6 says:

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men – the testimony given in its proper time.

There is some very important truth in that short passage:

- It is God's heartfelt desire that all men be saved and know the truth.
- As there is only one God, there is only one mediator between God and man – Jesus Christ.
- Jesus gave his life as a ransom so that all men could be saved.
- The death of Jesus was a testimony to the love of God.

The church needs to focus on these truths and the task of teaching them to the world. There is no time or place for silly controversies. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:8, "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing."

2.3 Instructions for Women

1 Timothy 2:9-15

In 1 Timothy 2:9-15, Paul addresses issues surrounding women in the church. Paul addressed similar issues in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35. In those two sections, Paul said that the freedom that women were experiencing in Christianity should not lead them to violate cultural norms of acceptable behavior nor does it give them license to be noisy and disruptive in church gatherings.

Paul has often been branded as a woman-hater, which is a huge injustice. The people who would label him as such are typically people who bristle at the idea that any confines should be

placed on behavior. That is another way of saying that they are unsubmitted to authority and feel that they should have the freedom to do whatever they feel like doing. As such, they are uncomfortable with Paul, because he believes in submission to authority and he believes in order.

In fact, Paul was a great liberator of women. One must remember that Paul's society viewed women as possessions. In the Jewish tradition, it would have been considered foolish at best and perhaps even sinful to teach a woman the things of religion. In the synagogue they were herded to the back and kept behind a wall that separated the men from the women. In society, a man could divorce a woman for doing something as "severe" as burning toast. If a man wanted to get rid of his wife, he simply wrote her a letter of divorce and sent her on her way.

Paul followed the model of Jesus in treating women with respect and honor. Paul brought women into the church. They sat alongside the men and received instruction. They prayed and prophesied in public. Paul also instructed the men in the church to "love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

Freedom can be carried too far, however. Paul brought freedom to women in the church, but he was concerned that this freedom should not violate cultural norms to a degree that would bring a bad reputation on the church. He was concerned that this freedom should not disrupt the church or the home. Freedom in Christ should edify the entire body of Christ. Thus a certain amount of restraint was warranted in the exercise of the freedom. When Paul gives instructions that seem to reign in the behavior of women, it was not an attempt to keep women in their place. It was intended to put the proper parameters around their freedom so that it did not become disruptive to the general well being of the church.

1 Timothy 2:9-11 echoes the teachings that we have already seen in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14:

I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.

Women should dress modestly such that they do not bring a bad reputation on the church (the same is true of men!). Women should not chatter in the church services, asking their husbands to explain to them what was being taught. Remember that Paul gave instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 for how a woman should pray or prophesy in church. Thus the mandate to be quiet cannot be taken to be absolute. The phrase "in full submission" is not uniquely applied to women. Paul also instructs men to be submitted to leadership.

1 Timothy 2:12-15 does add a new twist to the previous teaching, however:

I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

This is a difficult passage to interpret. It is another passage where different commentators take it vastly different ways. The statement that "women will be saved through childbearing" is particularly difficult. Does this mean that women have a different path to salvation than men?

Here is my attempt to make sense out of these verses.

Paul elevated the status of women in society. He considered them to be equal with men. He never considered them to be identical with men, however. In their equality, they have different roles to play. In the family, for instance, husbands are to love their wives, but wives are to submit to their husbands. In Genesis 3:16, God said to Eve, "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." In the Edenic world, God roamed freely among his people and everyone interacted freely. In the fallen world, a hierarchy had to be put into place because differences would arise and at times an authority would be needed. In response to that need, God assigned the husband to be the authority in the family. In the Genesis account, this seems to have been influenced at least in part by the fact that Eve is the one who originally responded to the suggestions of the serpent. (That does not absolve Adam from the responsibility for his own sin.)

Extending the order in the family to the church, a byproduct of that is that women should not assume leadership roles over men in the church.

This is a place where Paul specifically says "I do not permit..." rather than "God does not permit." This is "thus saith Paul" rather than "thus saith the Lord." Paul was careful to distinguish between the two. A "thus saith the Lord" was an eternal truth. A "thus saith Paul" was sound counsel in a specific situation.

The statement that "women will be saved through childbearing," cannot be taken in a soteriological sense. Remember that Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." In our standing before Christ, our differences dissolve. The statement might be considered in the context of the question of whether or not a woman is permitted to teach. Although it would be a strange use of the word "saved," this could imply that a woman's role as a teacher is saved for the home. A woman does teach the children that she bears. Furthermore, she should teach them the issues of the faith.

Another way to interpret the word "saved" is in the sense of being preserved. Childbearing was (and still can be) dangerous. Women do die giving birth. Perhaps this is a promise that God will protect women through this process "if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety." This interpretation is problematic as well. Does this imply that a woman who dies in childbirth must not have faith, love, and holiness? The rest of Scripture does not support the idea that bad things only happen to bad people.

The church throughout history has had difficulty interpreting this passage. A conservative response to this has been to keep women out of pastoral roles or roles that might involve teaching men for the last twenty centuries. It is a safe interpretation, but it may or may not be a correct one. If women are never supposed to teach men, then one must account for Acts 18:26, which says that Aquila and Priscilla instructed Apollos in the faith.

In Ephesus, where

- women were fairly new on the scene of being involved in religion,
- very few women were knowledgeable enough to teach religion,
- cultural norms would have prohibited women from having any authority over men,

I can believe that Paul did not want women teaching or pastoring. I have difficulty absolutely transposing that to the present time. I also admit that I do not know for sure.

I do know that Paul wanted to avoid controversy over this issue. Thus it is ironic and unfortunate that the issue of ordination of women is so controversial today. To those who seek to change the status of women in the church today, I would suggest that it may indeed be an invalid

interpretation of Scripture to restrict women from pastoral or teaching roles. I would also suggest that Scripture would require that they seek to make these changes in a manner that does not disrupt and does not discredit the church. Paul's bottom line on freedom in Christ is found in 1 Corinthians 8:13, "Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again."

2.4 Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons

1 Timothy 3

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul gives qualifications for Overseers and Deacons in the church. In Titus 1 he gives qualifications for Elders. What are Overseers, Deacons, and Elders?

The Greek word for "overseer" that is used in 1 Timothy 3:1 is "ἐπισκοπῆς," or "episkopes." (This is the word from which we get "Episcopal.") The word for "deacon" in that passage is "διάκονος," or "diakonos." The word for "elder" used in Titus 1:5 is "πρεσβυτερος," or "presbyteros." (This is the word from which we get "Presbyterian.")

The office of deacon seems to be that referenced in Acts 6. These men were appointed to take over some of the administrative functions of the church. They were servants to the church body. Their initial task in Acts 6 was that of overseeing the benevolence ministry by waiting tables.

The word for "overseer" has the connotation of a superintendent. This is someone in a leadership capacity, perhaps overseeing the work of a group of deacons. "Elder" has the connotation of someone mature in wisdom or spirit – not necessarily in age. Note that Titus 1:5 uses the word "elder" and Titus 1:7 uses the word "Overseer" to refer to the same group of people. The terms "Overseer" and "Elder" seem to have been interchangeable; thus they are different names for the same office.

The Pastoral Epistles give us qualifications for people who will fill these offices, but unfortunately they do not really define the function of these offices. Did the office of deacon carry any authority or was it strictly a servant role? Who or what did an overseer oversee? What was the relationship between these offices and the role of pastor? Why does the Bible give qualifications for deacons and overseers but not for pastors?

Unfortunately we do not have answers to all of these questions. The questions are framed in a twentieth century perspective, however, so they might not even make sense. Churches in the first century did not necessarily have a resident pastor. If they did, it is unlikely that Paul would have sent Timothy to pastor at Ephesus and Titus at Crete. More than likely an overseer or group of overseers was the resident authority in a local church. Note that 1 Timothy 5:17 indicates that their duties might include teaching and preaching. The deacons were a group that helped to administer the ministries of the church.

Whatever their exact duties were, deacons and elders were entrusted with the well being of the church. They were visible people in the church. They were in a position to help or hurt the church, based on the way they led their lives and conducted their affairs. Thus Paul felt that it was necessary to give some parameters for who could fill these roles.

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 he begins with the qualifications for overseer:

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness,

not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

The phrase "the husband of but one wife" has caused the church a certain amount of grief. A literal rendering of the Greek is "a one woman man." This seems to be a reference to polygamy. Paul did not want polygamous men to have leadership positions in the church. Churches have interpreted this in various ways in the past that have excluded people from ministries from which they might otherwise be qualified and called. Some have taken this as a mandate that pastors, deacons, etc., must be married. It is very hard to reconcile that with the body of Paul's teachings, where in other places he encourages people to remain single so that they can focus on the task of ministry. A more common interpretation of this passage is to disqualify divorced men from leadership roles in the church. The assumption is that a man who divorces and later remarries is now the husband of more than one wife. I believe this to be a harmful and erroneous interpretation of this passage. The church should take marriage and divorce very seriously. The church should hold leaders up to a high standard. They may have an obligation to understand the issues that may have led up to a divorce and to ensure that the issues have been resolved in the life of the individual.

What about a man whose wife left him and ran off with another man? He may have been totally innocent. Should he be disqualified? What about someone who may have been divorced before becoming a Christian? It is unfortunate that some churches will disqualify men like this because they are no longer "a husband of but one wife," but they can rationalize putting a remarried widower into a leadership role (he would no longer be a husband of but one wife according to this interpretation). I am not suggesting that a remarried widower should be disqualified, but it shows that the verse is not uniformly applied. Furthermore, I believe that the passage is speaking of polygamy and not divorce, anyway.

The other qualifications show that the individual should be a person respected inside and outside the church. His family should be in order. He should not be a new convert. He should be a person of discipline, well rooted in the faith, and able to teach others.

In 1 Timothy 3:8-12 he gives the qualifications for deacon, which are roughly a subset of those specified for overseer.

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

Again, the focus is on discipline, reputation, and family. The character of their wives matters. These men are to be tested before being put into office.

2.5 Countering False Teachings

1 Timothy 4:1-10

In the first chapter, Paul addressed the issue of false doctrines in the church. He returns to that topic in chapter 4. 1 Timothy 4:1-3 says:

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

This may suggest Gnostic or ascetic teachings, which would have people unreasonably denying themselves from gifts that God gave them. They are telling the people to refrain from marriage or from eating pleasurable foods – not for any reason in line with the teachings of Christ, but in an attempt to find some sort of salvation through this denial. Such teachings are contrary to the teachings of Jesus. Note that Paul himself has recommended celibacy and Scripture recommends fasting at times, but these are not viewed as paths to salvation. 1 Timothy 4:1-3 is talking about activities motivated by false doctrine, not activities that are submitted to Christ.

Paul encourages Timothy to fight these false teachings. He tells him in 1 Timothy 4:7, “Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales.” Timothy is to be a student and a spokesman of the truth and should not waste time bickering with people on these false doctrines.

2.6 Instructions to a Young Pastor

1 Timothy 4:11-5:2

In 1 Timothy 4:11-16, Paul gives advice to Timothy that is pertinent to anyone in a leadership position in a church:

Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Timothy was young and it may have intimidated him to minister to people who were older than he was. Paul did not want him to feel unqualified because of his age. It is his character that mattered, not his age. Timothy was to live an exemplary life for those to whom he ministered. He was to model Christ-likeness for them. He was to nurture his unspecified gift, which means that he was to be available so that the Holy Spirit might minister through him. In leading a model life, he could save himself and those who followed him.

In 1 Timothy 5:1-2, Paul gave Timothy some advice on how to handle interpersonal issues, which may have been an issue because of his age. He encouraged him to treat older men gently, as if each were his own father. At times they needed to be corrected, but it should be done with respect. He should deal with younger men lovingly, as an older brother might lovingly correct his younger brother. Likewise older women should be treated as Timothy might treat his

mother and younger women as sisters. If he really treated everyone as family then his motives and his actions would be pure. The people would recognize his love and would accept his leadership.

2.7 Care of Widows

1 Timothy 5:3-16

1 Timothy 5:3-16 gives instructions on care of widows. It seems that the church had some sort of an official list of widows who were supported by the church. To be eligible for the list, Paul says that the widow:

- must be over sixty years old.
- must have been faithful to her husband.
- must be well known for service to the church, having performed such deeds as raising children, being hospitable, performing foot-washings, etc.
- must be in real need

Paul indicates that a widow who has family should be supported by that family rather than by the church. Furthermore any woman who goes onto this list should enter a life of prayer service. She should devote herself to a life of prayer rather than one of seeking pleasure.

Paul indicates that younger widows should seek to remarry. If they are younger than sixty then they have other avenues of support and should not seek to come under the welfare of the church. There is an interesting phrase in 1 Timothy 5:11-12:

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge.

Once a widow goes on the list, for her to remarry is to break a pledge. We can infer from this that a church-supported widow took a pledge consecrating her life to prayer and dependence on the church. Having assumed that role, marriage was no longer an option. This may well be the role that was the precursor to the role of nun in the Catholic Church, although differences certainly do exist. Nuns typically never marry. They may enter as a young girl and not when they exceed sixty years of age. They may become nuns even though they have family who could support them. The roles are not identical, but they are similar.

2.8 Honoring of Church Elders

1 Timothy 5:17-20

Paul tells Timothy that the elders of the church are to be treated with honor, particularly those who perform the tasks of teaching and preaching. He indicates that it is appropriate for the church to pay them for administering their duties, which indicates that at least some overseers or elders served as a full-time calling. Timothy was to be slow to listen to accusations against elders and was to be thorough in making sure that accusations were true before any confrontation. This points to a truth that has never gone away. Church leaders are extra-susceptible to criticism, even from those inside the church. Paul did also say that if an elder is found to be in sin, he must be publicly rebuked. He is an example to others just because of the role he occupies. His sin is public and can lead others into sin. Thus his sin must be dealt with publicly. This is in-line with James 3:1:

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

2.9 Miscellaneous Personal Instructions to Timothy

1 Timothy 5:21-25

In 1 Timothy 5:21-25, Paul gives some personal instructions to Timothy. They include:

- Take care in carrying out Paul's instructions.
- Avoid favoritism in the church.
- "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands" (1 Timothy 5:22). This is probably a reference to appointment of deacons and elders – ordination. Paul had already indicated that men must be tested before being appointed to these roles. The church should be slow and cautious in elevating people to leadership, because if they prove to be unworthy, removing them can be a very public and damaging process.
- Do not get caught up in other people's sins. Be pure.
- 1 Timothy 5:23 says, "Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses." Anyone who has ever traveled to a foreign country can probably relate to the kinds of stomach problems and illnesses that one might get from drinking water. Timothy seems to have succumbed to this problem. Paul encourages Timothy to drink wine from time-to-time to help the problem.
- Paul encourages Timothy to let his life be characterized by good deeds that will be obvious to other men.

2.10 Instructions Concerning Slavery

1 Timothy 6:1-2

In 1 Timothy 6:1-2, Paul gives instructions to believers who are also slaves. Slavery was a very common thing in the Roman Empire. It was a different sort of slavery than we had in the early United States. The master-slave relationship in the Roman Empire is typically closer to the employer-employee relationship of today than the master-slave relationship experienced in the early United States. Slavery ran the gamut of professions. Slaves might be agricultural workers, as was common on southern plantations in the United States, but a Roman slave might also be a physician or a lawyer. Many were well educated and held positions of great responsibility. They were not free, however. Paul did not look upon slavery as a good thing, but it was not something that he tried to dismantle, either. 1 Timothy 6:1-2 says:

All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.

Most of us cannot identify exactly with the situation of Roman slaves. The principles are good ones, however, if we extrapolate them to our own workplaces. Our employers are to be treated with respect. If we behave in a respectful manner to them then we bring glory to God. Employers who are believers should be honored all the more. We should not take advantage of them because they are believers.

2.11 False Doctrine and Love of Money

1 Timothy 6:3-16

Paul again reminds Timothy to avoid false doctrine. Avoid people who want to turn religion in to a debate. Avoid people who think that “godliness is a means to financial gain” (1 Timothy 6:5). He says in 1 Timothy 6:6-10:

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:10 often gets misquoted as “Money is the root of all evil.” In fact, the saying is “The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.” It is not the money itself that leads to evil. It is the lust for money that is the problem. This is what captures men’s attentions and motivates them to do evil, attempting to gather more wealth. In contrast to the love of money, 1 Timothy 6:6 says that “godliness with contentment is great gain.” That is the only place that satisfaction may be found.

Paul tells Timothy to run from this sort of evil. He says in 1 Timothy 6:11-12:

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2.12 Instructions to the Wealthy

1 Timothy 6:17-19

In 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Paul gives instructions to those who already have money. He tells them not to be arrogant. They should not trust in their wealth, which is fleeting and uncertain. They should hope in God. They are also instructed to be generous to those in need. He says in 1 Timothy 6:19:

In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

2.13 Closing

1 Timothy 6:20-21

In the closing to the letter, Paul again encourages Timothy not to waste time entertaining dialogue with those who teach false doctrine. 1 Timothy 6:20-21 says:

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

Grace be with you.

3. Titus

Paul probably wrote Titus and 1 Timothy about the same time. As was indicated in the introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, this was probably after the Roman imprisonment of Acts 28. Paul was probably released from that imprisonment. After that he went on a fourth missionary journey. During that time, Timothy was sent to Ephesus and Titus to Crete to pastor and edify those churches. 1 Timothy and Titus were written to give advice to these pastors. The information in these two letters is very similar.

3.1 Greeting

Titus 1:1-4

The letter is from Paul and addressed to “Titus, my true son in our common faith” (Titus 1:4). Like Timothy, Paul considered Titus as a son and cared very much about him.

3.2 Qualifications for Elders

Titus 1:5-9

Titus 1:5 says:

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

It is from this verse that we learn that Titus was in Crete when the letter was written. Paul considered that the work in Crete needed attention because no structure had been put in place to support the growing church. Elders were needed to give the church direction. Then in Titus 1:6-9 he gives qualifications for those who would be elders. These are very similar to the list found in 1 Timothy 3. They include:

- An elder should be blameless, i.e. of good reputation. (Titus 1:6)
- An elder must be the husband of but one wife. (Titus 1:6)
- His children must be believers and well mannered. (Titus 1:6)
- He must not be overbearing, quick-tempered, or violent. (Titus 1:7)
- He must be moderate in use of alcohol. (Titus 1:7)
- He must not pursue dishonest gain. (Titus 1:7)
- He must be a person of hospitality. (Titus 1:8)
- He must love good, be self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. (Titus 1:8)
- He must be a firm believer in the Gospel so that he can teach and defend sound doctrine. (Titus 1:9)

3.3 Sound Teaching

Titus 1:10-3:11

3.3.1 The Judaizers

Titus 1:10-16

The last qualification for elder is one who held to sound doctrine and was able to teach it to others. In the next several sections Paul gives attention to some specific doctrines which needed defense in Crete. The first has to do with the Judaizers. In Titus 1:10 he refers to them as the “circumcision group.” Recall that these are the people who try to force Christians, even Gentile converts, to live under Jewish law. Paul spent a great deal of time and energy opposing this group.

Paul sternly denounces this group. He says that they are ruining lives for dishonest gain. Paul tells Titus to rebuke them and to “pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth” (Titus 1:14). The Judaizers tried to impose Jewish dietary laws and ceremonial cleanliness laws upon the Christians. In Titus 1:15 Paul said “To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure.” In Titus 1:16 he calls them “detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.”

Paul opposed the Judaizers in his earliest letters, including Galatians. He is still opposing them in this, one of his last letters.

3.3.2 Older Men and Women

Titus 2:1-5

Paul gave Timothy instruction on dealing with older men and women. He does the same for Titus. The message for them is that they should be people of good reputation, living disciplined lives pursuing the things of the faith. He specifically encourages older women to be mentors for younger women, teaching them to live proper lives and to love and support their families.

3.3.3 Younger Men

Titus 2:6-8

Paul encourages Titus to be an example for younger men. He should show them how to live lives of self-control and good character. It matters how the people of the church live their lives because it brings a reputation to the church – good or bad.

3.3.4 Slaves

Titus 2:9-10

Paul gives Titus instructions for slaves, just as he did Timothy. Slaves should be subject to their masters and treat them with respect. They should be honest in their dealings with their masters, earning their trust. The reputation of Christian slaves reflects upon the church just as does the reputation of Christians who were not slaves.

3.3.5 Salvation Which Conquers Evil

Titus 2:11-15

In keeping with the theme of sound doctrine, Paul tells Titus that the salvation provided to us by God equips us to say “no” to evil. It equips us to live disciplined and self-controlled lives. We are to be godly people in this age while we await the next. Titus should unapologetically tell people to conduct themselves in this way.

3.3.6 Submission to Government

Titus 3:1-2

In line with being people of good reputation, Paul instructs people to submit to civil authority. This theme is explored more fully in Romans 13. The thought here is the same.

3.3.7 Overcoming Evil with Good

Titus 3:3-8

Titus 3:3-7 says:

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Jesus saved us from many things. Without the new life that he gives us we are in bondage to many destructive evils – disobedience, deception, malice, envy, hatred, etc. Jesus gives us the strength and grace to overcome these things and replace them with the kindness and the love of God. Those who have accepted Jesus must realize that they have been empowered to rise above these things and they must walk forward in righteousness. This is the message that Titus must give to the Cretans. It is the message that Christians today need to know and understand.

3.3.8 Avoiding Foolish Strife in the Church

Titus 3:9-11

Titus 3:9-11 concludes the section on sound doctrine. Paul has addressed the things that should be taught and the things that should not. He summarizes all of this in Titus 3:9-11:

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

The church is not the place for open-minded “anything goes” debate. It is the place for teaching of sound doctrine. Who decides what is sound doctrine? The pastors and elders. Those who have been appointed to these leadership positions have a responsibility to ensure that sound doctrine is preached and that foolish controversies are avoided.

3.4 Closing

Titus 3:12-15

In the closing we learn that Paul is going to send someone to Crete to relieve Titus of his responsibilities. Paul wants Titus to join him and thus is sending someone else to minister to the Cretans.

In Titus 3:13 he instructs Titus to “help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.” He indicates that the church there needs to learn how to help provide for the necessities of others. We do not know who Zenas the lawyer is. This is the only reference to him in Scripture. We assume Apollos is the same man mentioned in Acts 18 and other places. These men must have been passing through Crete on a missionary journey. Paul wanted the church to assist them in their physical needs. The church should support those called to special ministry roles.

Paul closes with a greeting to Titus and to the church at large in Crete.

4. Second Timothy

2 Timothy was probably Paul's last letter. 2 Timothy 1:8 indicates that it was written from prison. This is probably a Roman imprisonment subsequent to the one in Acts 28. It may have been written shortly before Paul's death. In the letter, Paul seems to expect to face death very soon. He feels deserted by his friends and supporters. He is downcast and yet never without hope. To him death is a transition and not a finality.

In what may have been his last day, he wants to encourage and instruct Timothy, his son in the faith, one last time. This letter is intense, focused, and personal. It remains as a treasure for the church, which is still in need of instruction.

4.1 Greeting

2 Timothy 1:1-7

This letter is from Paul to Timothy. Paul tells Timothy that he prays constantly for him. He reminds Timothy of his spiritual heritage. We learn from 2 Timothy 1:5 that Timothy's mother was named Eunice and his grandmother was named Lois. They were both believers. Paul encourages Timothy to "fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (1 Timothy 1:6).

What happens in a "laying on of hands?" Why do we do it? What is imparted when we do it? The Bible uses a form of the phrase "laying on of hands" several different ways. Some have spiritual significance and others do not. The following usages appear throughout Scripture:

Those With No Particular Spiritual Significance:

- Genesis 37:27, talking about Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery says, "Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." "To lay hands" on someone can mean to do that person harm. We also see the phrase used in this manner in Genesis 22:12, Genesis 37:22, Exodus 7:4, Exodus 19:13, Joshua 2:19, 1 Samuel 23:17, 1 Samuel 26:9, 1 Samuel 26:11, 1 Samuel 26:23, Nehemiah 13:21, Job 30:24, Job 41:8, Isaiah 11:14, Jeremiah 15:6, Ezekiel 29:21, Luke 21:12, and Luke 22:53.
- Exodus 22:8 says, "But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges to determine whether he has laid his hands on the other man's property." "To lay hands" on property can mean to steal. We also see the phrase used in this manner in Exodus 22:11, Esther 9:10, Esther 9:15, Esther 9:16, and Lamentations 1:10.
- Job 9:33 says, "If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both." In this sense, laying hands on someone implies taking authority over that person. This usage also occurs in Psalm 139:5, John 7:30, and John 7:44.

Those With Spiritual Significance:

- Exodus 29:10 says, "Bring the bull to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head." Before a sacrifice was made, the ones making the sacrifice would lay hands on the head of the sacrificial animal. This usage occurs also in Exodus 29:15, Exodus 29:19, Leviticus 1:4, Leviticus 3:2, Leviticus 3:8, Leviticus 3:12,

Leviticus 4:4, Leviticus 4:15, Leviticus 4:24, Leviticus 4:28, Leviticus 4:32, Leviticus 8:14, Leviticus 8:18, Leviticus 8:22, Leviticus 16:21, Numbers 8:12, and 2 Chronicles 29:23.

- Leviticus 24:14 says, "Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him." Those who had been defiled by hearing the blasphemer's speech laid hands on the man before he was executed, symbolic of transferring the defilement to the man being executed.
- Numbers 8:10 says, "You are to bring the Levites before the Lord, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on them." This is the first place that we see laying on of hands used for ordination. Similar usage occurs also in Numbers 27:18, Numbers 27:23, Deuteronomy 34:9 ("Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him."), Acts 6:6 (the ordination of the first deacons), 1 Timothy 5:22 (instructions on ordination of elders and deacons), and Hebrews 6:1.
- Mark 6:5 says, "He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them." Laying on of hands was an instrument of healing. We see this also in Luke 4:40.
- Acts 8:18 says, "When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money." Laying on of hands was used to impart a filling of the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Timothy 4:14 says, "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you." Laying on of hands was used to impart spiritual gifts. We see this usage also in 2 Timothy 1:6.

There are two patterns here.

First, a person could transfer defilement by sin or defilement by having heard the words of a blasphemer, to another person or to a sacrifice. This had the effect of removing the curse of the sin from the person who laid hands and transferring it to the one upon whom the hands were laid.

Second, a person who was filled with the Holy Spirit could lay hands on another person and transfer some of the benefit of the Holy Spirit to that other person. We see examples of this in ordinations in the Old and New Testaments, in healings, in the impartation of a filling of the Holy Spirit, and in the impartation of equipping for spiritual gifts.

For a person living in defilement, laying on of hands transferred the curse of the defilement and left the individual free from the curse. For a person living in the Spirit, the laying on of hands transferred the benefit of the Spirit, but left the person who laid on the hands as filled as he was before. The curse was meant to be put to death. The Spirit was meant to give life.

At some point, elders and Paul himself had laid hands on Timothy for the purpose of imparting to him an equipping with spiritual gifts. Paul encouraged Timothy in both letters (1 and 2 Timothy) not to neglect his gifts but to use them for the glory of God. Paul encouraged Timothy to approach his ministry with boldness and confidence in the gifts that he had been given. He should operate in "a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

4.2 Preserve the Faith

2 Timothy 1:8-14

In 2 Timothy 1:8, Paul says, “So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner.” Paul is in prison. As we shall see later in the letter, he is lonely and feeling deserted by his friends. He asks Timothy to stay true to the Lord and to stay true to Paul. He is suffering and needs his friends for support. He also needs the grace of God, which he feels in spite of his circumstances. He says of this grace in 2 Timothy 1:10-12:

It has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

Paul considers the gospel to be worth any suffering that the world can offer. The truth that he holds sustains him through any of life’s circumstances. He also knows that the faithfulness with which he has lived his life has stored up for him treasures in heaven. Nothing in life can affect that, because God “is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.”

Paul does not want Timothy to be dissuaded from his faithfulness by Paul’s suffering or by any suffering that he experiences on his own. He calls him to persevere. Through the strength that comes to him from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he needs to remain faithful and true to the task of ministering the Gospel.

4.3 Paul is Deserted

2 Timothy 1:15-18

In 2 Timothy 1:15 we feel the pain in Paul’s heart:

You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Jesus felt the same thing. The night that he was arrested, his disciples abandoned him. When Paul found himself in a Roman jail, he too found himself abandoned by those who had been close to him. It hurt.

In 2 Timothy 1:16, he does call out a blessing on a man named Onesiphorus and his household. These people had ministered to him in his need.

4.4 Encouragement to Persevere

2 Timothy 2

In Chapter 2, Paul encourages Timothy to be strong for the task at hand. He tells him to stay focused like an athlete in a competition and to play by the rules, implying that he needs to stay true to the teachings that he has been given. He instructs Timothy to find reliable men to whom he can impart his teachings, so that they can impart it to others.

Paul says that he may be in chains, but that the word of God is never chained. It will endure and spread, bringing salvation to all who will receive it.

He encourages Timothy to avoid foolish quarrels in the church, a theme that is reflected in 1 Timothy and Titus. He must be focused and true. 2 Timothy 2:15-17:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene.

Paul cites a specific heresy that is being taught in the church, one that says that the resurrection (meaning the rapture) has already taken place. Timothy must fight such false teachings. 2 Timothy 2:20-21 says:

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

This has a double implication. On an individual level, each of us should clean up his own life and get rid of our wood and clay. What will be left is a vessel fit for noble purposes. At a corporate level the same thing applies. The church must get rid of the wood and clay, meaning false teachings such as those mentioned above. The church must stay in a mode of purifying itself, through reproof of doctrine and discipline of individuals when necessary. If it does not do this, it will get drawn into foolishness and lose focus. It will be suitable only for ignoble purposes.

In 2 Timothy 2:22-26, Paul gives Timothy some instruction about how he should conduct his own personal life. He is called to a life of righteousness and purity, avoiding “the evil desires of youth.” He is to conduct himself in a respectful and loving manner towards others. He must be able to instruct without being quarrelsome. He must be motivated out of a desire to lead other people into saving truth.

4.5 Trouble in the Last Days

2 Timothy 3:1-9

There are those, even today, who teach that the church is going to make the world a better place such that peace and harmony will prevail and people will get along. Paul never taught that. In fact, in 2 Timothy 3:1-9 he teaches quite the opposite:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth – men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

Could Paul have been writing a review of our evening news?

Several of these are obvious. Today we live in a society where people are lovers of money. Pursuit of the dollar is one of the highest values in our society. People will compromise, lie, cheat, and steal to achieve this goal. They sell out their personal lives and their families in order to provide for the very people they ignore in doing so.

We live in a society without self-control. We have invented a value that puts the rights of an individual above the good of society. Thus "if it feels good," we do it. We feel no need to be accountable to anyone, and the church has bought into that lie to a great degree.

Our society is abusive, brutal, and treacherous. Drive-by shootings have become a form of entertainment.

Much of this is a result of the breakdown of the family, which has also given birth to disobedience to parents and an attitude of unforgiveness. People grow up without a sense of self-worth. In an attempt to satisfy the voids in their lives, they become seekers of pleasure rather than seekers of God. They become unholy, ungrateful, without love, slanderous, rash, conceited, proud, and boastful. In all of this, they give an appearance of being lovers of themselves. In fact, they hate themselves, but they hate everyone else more. Thus their lives are focused on trying to ease the pain, being willing to step on anyone else in the process.

In the midst of this is a wounded gospel. Much of the church has lost the essence of its purpose and its calling. It has not persevered and retained its focus as Paul admonished Timothy to do. Thus we have many ornate buildings which house dead or dying churches. There is no life. There is no Spirit. They have a form of godliness but they deny its power.

There are also impostors in the church. Although Scripture does not tell us exactly who Jannes and Jambres are, they are assumed to be Pharaoh's sorcerers who provided tricks to rival some of the miracles of Moses. The church today (and always) has had those who would offer rival messages, trying to capture the attention of people and draw it away from the truth.

Paul told us all of this for a reason. The world is not going to get better. We should not expect it to. Instead, the church should fortify itself for a fight. We must stay true to our calling. We must stay focused to the message of the Gospel. We must never deny the power of the Spirit. We must stay pure, a vessel fit for noble purposes. It is not going to get easier. The world is literally going to hell and it is our job to rescue as many as we can along the way. We can only be effective in this if we stay impressed with the seriousness of the task.

4.6 Personal Instructions to Timothy

2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

Paul tells Timothy that those who choose to serve the Gospel can expect persecution. Paul's life is a prime example of that. That should not sway us from the task, however. He tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-17:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Again, perseverance and focus is required. He must keep his mind on Scripture – the best tool that he has available to him. It is God-breathed, which means that it is the word of God, inspired through the Holy Spirit. It is a vital tool for the tasks of teaching, rebuking, correcting, and

training in righteousness – all things which Paul has commissioned Timothy to do. Scripture is the foundation of each of these activities. The outcome of all of these activities is that “the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Just as was true with spiritual gifts, Scripture was given for the purpose of edifying the church. Men are equipped to bear fruit in the Kingdom.

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Paul says:

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

When this happens, Timothy should not be discouraged. He can only persevere. His task is to present the truth and leave the outcome to the Holy Spirit.

After a life of persevering, a reward awaits. In 2 Timothy 4:6-8, Paul sounds tired. He sounds resolved to face death. He is ready to receive that which he has “entrusted to him for that day.” He says:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

There can be no greater reward in life than to have this kind of certainty about how it will end. To Paul, death will be a time of stepping into the victor’s circle to receive a crown of righteousness. It will be placed on his head by the Lord himself. What a longing that should create in each of us who tire of living in the unrighteousness of this world.

4.7 Closing

2 Timothy 4:9-22

2 Timothy 4:9-18 says:

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This is a very personal section. Again, Paul is feeling the pain of his desertion. Luke is his only companion. He wants Timothy to come to him. He also asked Timothy to bring Mark, "because he is helpful to me in my ministry." Recall Acts 15 when Paul and Barnabus had a parting of the ways because Paul did not want Mark to travel with them. Obviously Paul and Mark had reconciled and Paul now found him to be a comforting assistant. Philemon and Colossians both mention Mark as one of Paul's companions in prison.

We do not know who Crescens, Alexander, and Carpus are. Tychicus is mentioned in Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, and Titus 3:12. He seems to have been an important companion of Paul. Demas is mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24. He seems to have been another traveling companion of Paul, but had turned away from him.

Paul closes with greetings to Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus, who was mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:16. He urges Timothy to join him quickly.

We have no way of knowing whether or not Timothy ever saw Paul after he received this letter. Tradition says that Paul was beheaded in Rome. That beheading probably concluded Paul's current imprisonment. Whether or not Timothy made it to Paul's side before that happened we do not know.

2 Timothy closes the body of Paul's writings. He was a man who had spent his life following God. Initially he did it in ignorance, persecuting the young church. After a dramatic calling on his life on the road to Damascus, he spent the rest of his life pursuing God in a knowledge born out of a personal relationship.

We must be careful at times not to put Paul on a level equal with Jesus. He certainly did not. The servant is not greater than the master and Paul would be the first to tell you that he was the servant and not the master. His writings gave form to the church, however. The church is the bride of Christ, and in many ways Paul serves as the father of the bride. He instructed and corrected the church. He nurtured it and caused it to grow. He invested his time and emotions in its well being.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Paul that can never be repaid. We do not have to repay it, however. "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day." He has his reward.

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