

# **Letters to Young Preachers**

A Class Commentary on 1, 2 Timothy and Titus

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Lesson 1

# Introduction

## **Paul's Relationship to Timothy**

The books of 1 & 2 Timothy are written to a young man who played a very special role in the life of Paul. To fully understand these books, we need to look at the life of this young man and his contact with the apostle.

Timothy was born to a Jewish mother, who believed, and a Greek father, who apparently did not believe (Acts 16:1). He received instruction about God from the scriptures at a young age from his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). His name means, "one who fears God."

Paul calls Timothy his "true son in the faith," which leads us to believe that he was one of his converts (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2). Paul may have first met him when he arrived in Lystra and Derbe on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-21). When Paul returned to that area as he began the second missionary journey with Silas, he found that the brethren from both Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy. Paul chose him to be a helper in his various works for the Lord. To avoid criticism from the Jews, and because his mother was a Jew, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:1-3).

Timothy was with Paul through Phrygia, Galatia and on into Macedonia. Timothy and Silas stayed in Berea while Paul went on to Athens because the crowd was being stirred up by the Jews who had come from Thessalonica (Acts 16:4-17:15). Though Paul sent for them from Athens, he immediately sent them out again to Thessalonica to encourage the brethren there and strengthen them in the faith. They next rejoined Paul at Corinth (1 Thessalonians 3:1-5; Acts 18:5). It is thought that both of the letters to Thessalonica were written from Corinth, and Timothy was the bearer of them to the church (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1).

During the third missionary journey, Paul continued to work in Asia while he sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia. Not long after that, Paul told the Corinthians that Timothy would likely come to them (Acts 19:22; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10). They were together when the second letter was written to Corinth as well as the letter to the Romans (2 Corinthians 1:1;

Romans 16:21). They were together on the trip through Greece, Macedonia and on into Troas (Acts 20:1-7). From that point forward, Acts is silent about Timothy. We do know that he was with Paul as he wrote the prison epistles (Colossians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Philemon 1). It was Paul's desire to send Timothy to Philippi to encourage the brethren and be able to give Paul a report. It is interesting to note the great trust he placed in this young preacher (Philippians 2:19-24).

### **Dating 1 & 2 Timothy**

It seems likely that the first epistle to Timothy was written after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome was over. The second epistle was during a second imprisonment. Acts only mentions the first imprisonment, but we can be fairly confident there was a second. Acts ends with Paul in custody but confidently preaching the gospel. Paul told Philemon to prepare a room for him, as if he soon expected to be

released (verse 22). In contrast, Paul writes the second epistle to Timothy expecting to die in the near future (4:6, 9, 21).

The first epistle was written to Timothy in Ephesus, where Paul had placed him to work with the church (1:3) The second letter may also have been addressed to the same city since both 1:15 and 18 hint at that location. A careful reading of both letters will cause one to feel that Paul was closely guiding the labor of this young preacher as he worked to build up the church.

Circumstances had changed by the time Paul wrote the second letter to Timothy. As he wrote, he was being held as a prisoner and soon expected to die. It appears that he was in Rome during the time of Nero's severe persecution of the church. Thus, the letter would have been written between 64 and 68 A.D.

Timothy appears to have been working in Ephesus

when this letter was sent. Paul wrote in hopes that Timothy would be able to join him. However, it is obvious Paul also wrote with the idea of encouraging Timothy to carry on in spite of the terrible persecution the church was enduring, and would endure. If Timothy did not reach Paul before he died, this letter surely must have encouraged him.

### **Titus and His Relationship to Paul**

Two young men in the New Testament stand out because of their relationship with the apostle Paul. Timothy is better known because he is so often with Paul in Acts. Titus' name never appears in Luke's record. However, it appears he was at the center of the controversy which led to the Jerusalem conference. Paul clearly stated that Titus was a Greek. When some brethren tried to insist Titus be circumcised, Paul refused to submit to them lest the gospel of Christ be compromised. James, Peter and John extended to Paul the right hand of fellowship and the controversy ended (Galatians 2:1-10). J. W. Roberts, in his book on Titus, Philemon and James, states plainly that Titus was present with Paul in Ephesus since it was from there that

...he was sent to Corinth in connection with the collection for the saints and to learn the effects of the First Corinthian letter (II Cor. 7:6-9; 8:6; 12:18). While there he had acted

in a commendable way. After this he went to Macedonia, where he rejoined Paul, who had expected to join him at Troas (Acts 20:1f; II Cor. 2:12f; 7:6; 8:23). The news which he brought to Paul from Corinth was cheering (II Cor. 7:6). He was then sent before Paul to Corinth to complete the contribution (II Cor. 8:16f, 23).

Paul clearly trusted Titus. This is seen in all the various tasks he was sent to perform, as observed in the above references. By the time the letter bearing his name was written, he was on the island of Crete. His duties there will be discussed as we comment on specific verses within the epistle.

### **The Nature and Purpose of Paul's Writing**

The letters of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus "are of the greatest interest, for no letters in the New Testament give such a vivid picture of the growing Church. In them we see the problems of a Church which is a little island of Christianity in a sea of paganism; and in them

we see as nowhere else the beginnings of the ministry of the Church” (Barclay, ix). As Bruce Stewart noted, Paul wrote the letters to Timothy and Titus like a father might write a letter to his son. Stewart also says Paul had the purpose of expressing affection and appreciation, while charging them personally with rebuking false doctrine, reminding brothers and sisters of basic teaching, living as examples, using their gifts to teach others, guarding their relationship to God, holding the pattern of sound words and remaining cool in volatile situations (pp. 1-2).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Briefly describe the life of Timothy.
2. List some of the things going on in Paul's life as he wrote the first letter to Timothy.
3. List some of the different circumstances in Paul's life when he wrote the second letter.
4. Tell what you know about Titus.

5. In your own words, describe the type of letters Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus, including the purpose of the letters.

## Lesson 2

# A Charge to Teach No Other Doctrine

1 Timothy 1:1-20

### Greetings

As in most of the letters of the first century, Paul opens

by introducing himself. He probably identifies himself as an apostle to stress that this is not just a personal letter but one intended to further the cause of Christ at God's direction, or commandment. One record of God's commandment to Paul can be found in Acts 26:16-18. He was to carry forth the word of God, who sent his Son to save the world from sin (John 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:19). That Son is both Lord, or master; Jesus, or the one who would save his people from their sins; and Christ, or God's anointed king. Certainly, he is also the source of our hope (1 Timothy 1:1; Romans 5:1-2).

Timothy can be described as Paul's true child in the faith because there was nothing fake about his conversion. Paul was not ashamed to commend this loyal soldier of Christ to the churches (Philippians 2:19-24; 1 Corinthians 16:10-11). The word grace was a form of the Greek greeting, while peace was the Hebrew greeting. In the Christian context, they are especially meaningful since we are saved by God's

grace and that brings a special inner peace to our lives. Without God's mercy, we could not be saved since we were rebellious sinners with no means of saving ourselves (1 Timothy 1:2; Ephesians 2:8-10, 4-5; Philippians 4:7).

### **Charging Others to Teach No Other Doctrine**

The word "urged" carries the idea of pleading or begging, according to Spain. It is an encouraging word that leaves the person with a sense of dignity. Timothy needed to stay in Ephesus while Paul went on to Macedonia because some urgently needed to be instructed to preach only the doctrine of Christ. Remember, Paul had warned the Ephesian elders of the coming of false teachers (Acts 20:28-32). They also needed to be warned not to pay attention to false stories and constant searching through genealogies (Titus 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16). The result of looking at such false stories and tracing lineage back to Abraham led only to disputes. Lipscomb says that Herod the

Great destroyed the genealogies because he could not trace his line back to Abraham. God kept the lines clear until the true Savior came. Now, one could come claiming to be the savior but could have no clear proof. Instead of that which tore down, Paul would have Timothy urge them to the study of things that would produce godly edifying and thus enhance their faith (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

Sound teaching will produce three desired results. First, there will be love, in the sense of a desire for the ultimate good of others. This will come from a cleansed heart, not outward ceremonial cleansings. Second, there will be a good conscience that is well trained in God's will. Third, there will be a faith without hypocrisy. The false teachers at Ephesus had missed the mark of the true faith and involved themselves in empty talking. These teachers wanted the respect that was always given to true teachers of the law of Moses, but they did not understand its ultimate purpose (Galatians 3:19-25). Their failure to understand the

law's purpose caused them to miss out on the true glories of the gospel of Christ (1 Timothy 1:5-7).

### **Understanding the Purpose of the Law**

Paul was not saying that the law was not from God or that it did not fulfill a very important part of his purpose. It was the law that taught man he was a sinner. The law was holy but man could not live up to the perfection it demanded (Romans 7:7-12). Further, there was not a provision for the removal of sin under the law. Thus, the law of Moses had to be called the law of sin and death (Hebrews 10:1-4; Romans 8:2). Paul then went on to show what the false teachers failed to understand about the law. The law was not made for the man dead to the law and freed from sin (Romans 7:1-4; Romans 5:6-11). Its purpose was to reveal sin to man and make him realize the exceeding sinfulness of it (Romans 3:20; 7:13).

The first four specific sins Paul lists that are

condemned by the law obviously refer to violations of the first four of the ten commandments which deal with a man's relationship to God. The next sins Paul lists are extreme violations of the last six of the ten commandments. Not only was the law a rule for the worst of the criminals, but it also dealt with more every day situations that led to a man going against sound teaching. All of those sins would be condemned not only by the law of Moses but also by the glorious good news our great and blessed God committed to Paul. He had to preach it so man could realize the danger of sin and turn to God for help (1 Timothy 1:8-11).

### **Thanking God for His Gracious Gift**

No one understood the impact of sin on his life like the apostle Paul did (Romans 7:24-25). Grateful for the salvation afforded him through Christ and the opportunity to tell others about it, the apostle burst into praise. The word "enabled" suggests a giving of strength, which Paul appropriately attributes to Christ

(Philippians 4:13). In his life before Christ, Paul spoke against the Son of God and his church, or blasphemed. He also persecuted the body of Christ, even to cities outside of Jerusalem (Acts 22:4-5; 26:9-11). Coffman says the word "insolent" describes "a person who takes a savage personal delight and a malicious enjoyment in the afflictions inflicted upon another." With this rising tide of charges against him, Paul surely felt he was in a hopeless state, but God gave him mercy. Sin had blinded him to the point that he believed he was doing the very works God would have him to do (1 Timothy 1:12-13; Acts 23:1).

God's grace is only in Christ, where we also find the source of our faith and love. Just as much as Paul's sin abounded, just so God's grace abounded (Romans 5:20). Here was a man who had violently opposed Christ and his cause, yet Jesus came to save him. It is completely true that Jesus came into the world to save sinners (Luke 19:10; Matthew 9:12-13). We ought to totally accept the idea that Jesus came to save

sinner. By saving the terrible persecutor of his body, Jesus said to all lesser sinners that he would save them, too. Paul became God's example of just how far his mercy could go. Guthrie says the word "pattern" presents two ideas to us. It "may be understood either as an outline sketch of an artist, or as a word-illustration expressing an author's burning purpose." Thus, all who follow Paul's conversion should see God's intent to save all sinners. This should cause us to believe on Christ with a look forward to eternal life through complete obedience (1 Timothy 1:14-16).

It is natural that one saved from such sins that he may have thought unforgivable would burst forth with thankful praise. In this expression of praise, we have an apt description of God. He is eternal, without beginning or end (Hebrews 13:8; 7:1-3, 20-25). He is immortal in that he will not die and invisible because he is a spirit (Exodus 3:14; John 4:24). There is only one God, not a plurality of them as the Greeks thought (1 Timothy 1:17; Ephesians 4:6).

### **Renewing the Charge to a Young Preacher**

Next, the inspired apostle renews the charge he gave Timothy in verse 3. Paul wrote to this young man he loved as a son and committed to him, as one gives money to a bank, the preaching of the truth in the face of many opponents. We do not know what the prophecies concerning Timothy were, but they likely resembled those made concerning Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:1-3). The seriousness of the Christian's task can be seen in the numerous references to a war between Satan's forces and God's (1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-17).

Once we have been trained in the faith, we should be able to follow our conscience. Paul says some failed to do as their conscience, which was directed by God's truth, dictated and thus made a shipwreck of their faith. Spiritual death is the ultimate end of such unless they can be brought to repentance (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Paul gave two examples of Christians whose spiritual lives were in ruins. He said he had delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan, which reminds us of 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. The purpose of delivering one to Satan is to save them in the day of judgment. In this case, these two had to learn not to speak against God and the truth. Hymenaeus may be the man who said the resurrection was already past (1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:17-18).



5. Discuss things for which every Christian should thank God.

6. Explain the circumstances under which a conscience can be a good guide.

### Lesson 3

# Instructions on Public Worship

1 Timothy 2:1-15

## **Praying for all Men**

To be able to hold firm to the faith and teach it in the face of the opposition mentioned in the first chapter, Paul went on to urge Timothy to do certain things. A supplication is an entreaty to God to provide for a particular need. Prayers include petitions, expressions of thanks and adoration, according to Coffman. Spain says intercessions are an opportunity for the Christian to have an intimate talk with the King. Thanksgiving is an expression of gratitude. These various forms of prayer were to be offered up for all men. This may be difficult to receive, but it suggests we even need to approach God with a thankful attitude about our enemies and those who may persecute us (1 Timothy 2:1).

Few governments have ever treated Christians more cruelly than that of Rome, yet Paul said to pray for kings. God gave governments power so that anarchy would not prevail (Romans 13:1-7). Christians are

also to pray for those in lower offices of government. If government functions well, we can live in peace and exercise godly and honest living. Both the prayers and the resulting peaceable life are in accord with the Lord's will. If we are living true lives of godliness, we will be taking the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20). When we seize the extra opportunities afforded us during times of peace, more men get a chance to obey the gospel and fulfill God's ultimate desire for all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:2-4).

Lipscomb notes the people of Paul's day who believed in many gods also believed there were different gods for each nation. Thus, they could not pray to their god for the people of another nation. In Christ, we come to realize there is but one God over all men. So, we pray for all men to one God. A mediator is one who stands between two parties who are at odds with one another. In this case, man's sin made him an enemy of God. Jesus came to the earth as a man so he could serve as mediator between God and man. We cannot go to

God by any other since only Jesus has paid the price for sin and made it possible for man to approach the Father (1 John 2:1-2).

Jesus willingly gave himself as an offering for the sins of man (Matthew 20:28; John 10:17-18). The word "ransom" suggests Jesus gave himself in the place of man. Remember, sin brings death as natural payment (Romans 6:23). Jesus came at precisely the time God had planned for him to come (Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:4, 10). Everything was in readiness for his coming. Because God is the God of all men and he will have all men to be saved, we should pray for all men (2:1, 4-5). The church's love for souls originates out of that same background. Too, God's desire to see all saved caused him to send Paul forth to proclaim the good news and give instructions that would cause the Gentiles to fully understand the truth (1 Timothy 2:5-7).

### **Instructions for Men and Women Concerning Worship**

The words "I desire" suggest a strong desire that directs the actions of others. The word used for "men" here indicates the male of the species in direct contrast to women. It should also be noted that elders, deacons and preachers are not specifically designated as prayer leaders but all men. "Everywhere" seems to indicate public places. Remember, in John 4:21-24, Jesus indicated worship would not take place in one location but wherever it was in spirit and truth. Paul says one who lifts up his voice in prayer to God, particularly in public assembly, should have his hands dedicated to God's service. Also, prayers are to be offered without violent feelings or a spirit that is ready to dispute with others over matters already settled by the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 2:8).

Just as the men should be prepared for worship, so should the women prepare themselves. A woman can make herself attractive by wearing clothing that befits a woman dedicated to her Lord (compare 1 Peter 3:3-4). She should wear clothes which show respect for

God and those around her, which is the idea behind the word “propriety.” “Moderation” suggests simplicity with self-restraint. Her clothing and hairstyle should not be filled with worldly trappings that call attention to one’s wealth. Instead, her godly actions should stand out to all who meet her. Her desire to be like God will shine through in the good works she does to his glory (1 Timothy 2:9-10; Matthew 5:13-16).

The apostle’s directions about “silence” are better understood in the A. S. V., which has Paul saying a woman should learn in “quietness.” She is not forbidden to use her voice at all, but must avoid boisterous conduct that would lead to confusion in worship and prevent those assembled from being edified. Certainly, she can join in the singing and even participate in the classes, as long as she subjects herself because of God’s order of authority. Titus 2:3-5 makes it clear Paul is not opposing all teaching by women. Instead, we must note it is teaching men which would require her to exercise authority, or be the

master over men, which is forbidden. Since Paul began in verse 8 with directions relating especially to prayer in public places, we assume these directions also are particularly for worship (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Paul went on to give a scriptural reasons for the instructions regarding women and worship. First, God's order of creation was man first and woman second (1 Corinthians 11:9). Second, is the sin committed in the Garden of Eden. Both Adam and Eve sinned, but Paul tells us the woman was deceived (Genesis 3:1-7). Paul is not suggesting the woman's sin was worse than the man's but the fact that she was deceived suggests she could be more easily led astray (1 Timothy 2:13-14).

The reference to woman being saved in childbearing is seen by Roberts to mean, "that childbearing is taken as the typical function of woman's place as wife, mother, and keeper of the home. That woman will be saved, not by seeking man's place but by keeping her

own place in God's scheme, which may well be summed up by 'childbearing.'" This is only true if she continues to exhibit self-control, obedient faith toward God, love for God and her fellow man and generally remains set apart to God's service (1 Timothy 2:15).

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the various words used by Paul to describe the type of prayers which can and should be offered. Then, tell ways we might use such today.

2. Discuss the Christian's relationship to government.

Explain how the true God is different from other gods of Paul's day.

3. List Paul's instructions to men in regard to their prayers.

4. Tell ways women were to prepare themselves for

worship.

5. Discuss Paul's instructions to women in reference to "silence" and having authority over men.

6. Tell the scriptural reason Paul gave these instructions.

## Lesson 4

# Qualifications of Elders and Deacons

1 Timothy 3:1-16

### Qualifications of Bishops

Paul turned from leadership in worship to leadership in the church. Men are not to be drafted into this work against their will but must desire this work. Spain says the word desire "means to long for or eagerly desire. Such desire and aspiration is commendable when it issues from a heart filled with love for Christ and his church." The bishop is an overseer or shepherd of God's people, thus the same as pastor. In Acts 20, Paul called for the elders of the church in Ephesus in verse 17 but referred to their job as that of being bishops, or overseers, over the flock of God in verse

28. The office of bishop is not an honorary one but is referred to by Paul as a task. An elder does not have to be sinlessly perfect, but certainly should have a good reputation. The A. S. V. uses the words "without reproach" and Roberts says, "In the meaning of the original a man is blameless when no charge which had not been corrected can be brought against him." This qualification may actually refer to how a man meets the rest of the items listed.

A bishop must be a one-woman man, or one who has kept God's marriage law. He must also be vigilant, or temperate, which suggests self control. This man must keep his desires in check as Paul told the Corinthians he had to keep his body under him (1 Corinthians 9:27). He further should be a sober-minded man, or one who knows how to be serious when such is called for. Good behavior implies a well-ordered outward life that reflects the inward Lordship of Christ. A man given to hospitality would be concerned about the needs of others (Matthew 25:31-46). He must be a

man well acquainted with God's word and ready to use it to the benefit of the flock of God (1 Timothy 3:1-2).

An elder cannot be a man who is addicted to the use of wine. Neither can he be a man with a quick temper that would cause him to strike someone in anger. Also, he cannot be a lover of money who would do anything for personal gain (6:10; Colossians 3:5). A man who is "gentle" is sensitive to the feelings of others and ready to listen. Elders must not be argumentative or constantly seeking a word fight, which is the meaning of "quarrelsome." A constant desire to possess those things that belong to others is not a characteristic desirable in elders (1 Corinthians 5:10). Naturally, a man's leadership experiences at home will play a crucial role in how he will lead the church. His children should respect and be subject to him. That the plural form "children" can be Biblically used of people with only one child is evident from a simple reading of Genesis 21:7. If one cannot direct his own family at home, how could he possibly be expected to

direct the family of God (1 Timothy 3:3-5)?

An inexperienced Christian should not be considered for the office of bishop because he might fall prey to pride (1 Corinthians 13:4). A man who assumed too much self importance because he was selected as a leader by God's people would find himself in the same condemnation as the devil (Revelation 20:10). Even those outside the body of Christ should recognize the potential elder as a good man. Non-members do not exercise authority in the church because of this statement. Instead, it recognizes our desire to reach the world and the fact that it will be hindered by our selecting leaders who are known as scoundrels to those we try to teach. The snare of the devil may either be a snare laid by him or the same one he fell into. In either case, it would lead to a bad result for the one in it (1 Timothy 3:6-7).

#### **Qualifications of Deacons**

By using the word "likewise," Paul made it clear that the qualifications of deacons are as important as those of elders. The word deacon comes from the original diakonos, which Vine says "primarily denotes a servant, whether as doing servile work, or as an attendant rendering free service." The word is used of Christ (Romans 15:8), his followers actions toward one another (Matthew 20:26), those who serve the church whether from an appointed office or as one who just loves the body (Romans 16:1; Philippians 1:1) and of various others. In this place, Paul obviously has an office in mind. These men must be serious and reverent. He must not say one thing when he means another or say different things to different people. He must not be a man addicted to, or having his mind occupied with, wine. Neither should he be one who is hungry for evil money, or money acquired in a dishonest way (1 Timothy 3:8).

Throughout the Old Testament period, the way of salvation was hidden from man, thus a mystery. That

mystery is made known in the gospel of Christ. A man qualified to be a deacon will keep the faith so that his conscience is free from guilt. Like elders, deacons must be men who have passed the test of time as a Christian. This will enable him to assume the duties assigned him and not be found to have a charge against him that is not corrected (1 Timothy 3:9-10).

In 1 Timothy 3:11, the A. S. V. begins with the words, "women in like manner must," thus showing the true difficulty this verse presents. Is Paul speaking to a special class of women who work in the church or is he speaking to the wives of the deacons? If this is to the wives of deacons as the N. K. J. V. translates, why is there nothing to the wives of elders? Lipscomb believed there were some needs women in the church had that a man could not properly attend to. Coffman felt Paul would have called them by a special name if they were to have a special office. He notes that a wife could certainly effect the working of her husband and would play a vital role in his attending to the needs

of women. It seems to this author that the verse is written in too broad a sense to be directed to a special office but it may refer to women who attend to special needs of women without holding a special office. In any case, Paul says these women must be serious minded and avoid gossip, which can tear down the character of others. They must be trustworthy and not be given to excesses (1 Timothy 3:11).

God's law for marriage is one woman for one man for life (Matthew 19:3-9). Men who would serve the church must respect that law. Notice that this qualification omits women as potential office holders. A man who cannot control his own family is not suited to hold a position of authority in the family of God. Men who use the office of a deacon well will be held in honor by their brethren and will have greater courage in furthering Christ's cause (1 Timothy 3:12-13).

#### **Personal Instructions to Timothy**

Paul hoped he would soon be able to visit with Timothy in person about the organization of the church and actions of those who make it up. However, he knew travel was uncertain and plans could suddenly be changed. Timothy needed this information to carry out the charge he had from Paul. If he was delayed in coming, Paul wanted Timothy to know the things comprising proper behavior in the church. He described the church as God's house or dwelling place (compare 1 Corinthians 3:5-17). The apostle may have also intended to represent the church as God's family. The church is a dwelling place for a living God, which is in stark contrast to the dead gods many worshiped during Paul's day. A pillar serves as undergirding or support. In this case, the church is said to support the truth, and, if we fail to do that, we fail in our primary mission (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

There can be no argument as to the great importance of the gospel, which is the mystery. It shows man the way to piety or reverence toward God. Jesus was God

incarnate, that is, God in the flesh (John 1:1-3, 14; Romans 1:3; Hebrews 2:14; 5:7; 1 John 3:5, 8). Jesus was declared by the Spirit to be righteous. This was done at his baptism (Matthew 3:13-17) and in his resurrection (Romans 1:4). Of course, the Spirit also declares his righteousness in all the words of the Bible which point to Christ as God's Son. Angels attended to the Lord's needs while he was here on earth (Matthew 4:11), so we might say they saw to his needs. Jesus' name has been and must be declared to all the nations, which certainly includes the Gentiles (Isaiah 2:1-4; Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:23). Such preaching, received into honest hearts, has caused many to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37). Christ's ascension was the last great physical proof of his deity (1 Timothy 3:16; Acts 1:9-11; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:26, 50-53).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the importance of a man desiring the work of a bishop.

2. Briefly discuss each of the following:

- a. Blameless
- b. The husband of one wife
- c. Temperate
- d. Sober-minded
- e. Of good behavior
- f. Hospitable
- g. Able to teach
- h. Not given to wine
- i. Not violent
- j. Not greedy for money
- k. Gentle

- l. Not quarrelsome
  
- m. Not covetous
  
- n. One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence
  
- o. Not a novice
  
- p. Good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

3. Discuss Paul's instructions with reference to the women.

4. Explain why Paul gave the instructions set forth in this first letter.

Lesson 5

**The Coming Apostasy  
and Timothy's Work**

1 Timothy 4:1-16

## **The Coming Apostasy**

Despite the fact that Jesus had been fully shown to be Lord, the Spirit plainly revealed to Paul a coming apostasy. At some time in the future, Paul said some would abandon or desert the sum of things believed by Christians. Instead, they would addict themselves to the teaching that leads men astray. This doctrine comes from evil spirits through the men who allow themselves to be used as their instruments (1 Kings 22:20-22). The teaching may be called the doctrine of demons in the same sense or it may refer to false teachings about demons. These false teachers would knowingly teach error. A hypocrite is one who plays a role or acts out a part. These false teachers would use their role playing to deceive others and lead them away from the truth. Like a man who builds up a callous through hard work, these teachers would consciously turn themselves away from the truth until they became hardened to it (1 Timothy 4:1-2; Ephesians 4:17-19).

Paul said those false teachers would forbid marriage and the eating of meats as a part of their false doctrine. Some had the belief that flesh was evil, which might have led to this erroneous teaching in the late first and early second century. In our own times, others have obviously followed the same course. Yet, God did not disallow marriage or the eating of meats (Hebrews 13:4; Mark 7: 18-19). God made marriage because it was not good for man to be alone. He also made meat for man to eat. Any teaching contrary to this is in error (Genesis 2:18-25; 9:1-4). Man was forbidden to eat the blood of animals with the meat, but not the meat. Everything God created is good if it is used in a manner befitting God's purpose. Of course, all things given by God should be received with thanksgiving and not be considered taboo. All things were made holy by God's word in the creation (Genesis 1:4, 12, 17, 21, 25, 31). We set it apart for God's service when we give thanks for it (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

## **A Good Minister of Jesus Christ**

If Timothy presented lessons to the Ephesians that caused them to see the truths already presented, which included instructions on the dangerous false doctrine soon to arise, he would be a good minister. It is appropriate to designate one who teaches the gospel as a minister (Acts 6:4; Colossians 4:7). Also, we should observe that such ministers do teach and warn the brethren as well as proclaiming the good news to the lost. Paul and other faithful teachers had brought Timothy up on a diet of the faith and good teaching. Timothy had closely followed what he had learned and was therefore well qualified to teach others (1 Timothy 4:6).

Worldly stories created in the mind of man with no foundation in truth should be avoided. Instead, constant training and discipline should be used to lead the young preacher to a more God-like life. Care for

the body is good in the short run because it enhances our physical health. In contrast, spiritual exercise intended to mold a life in accord with God's will has the advantage of God's care in this life and an eternal reward in the life to come (Romans 8:28-39). The apostle's emphasis of godly exercise was trustworthy and should be accepted by all (1 Timothy 4:7-9).

The lasting value of godliness moved Paul to work hard like an athlete who is fatigued by a hard workout. Those who strive to be like God have their hope set on that God. In contrast to the false gods whose idols would have been a familiar sight of that day, Paul emphasized the true God is alive. It was God's desire and Jesus' intent to save all men (2:4; Luke 19:10), but salvation is particularly for believers. One who truly believes will be obedient (Matthew 7:21-27; John 3:16; 36 A. S. V; Hebrews 5:8-9). Using the imagery of an army, Paul instructed Timothy to "command" the things he had set forth. The commander issues a command, and it is passed through the ranks. Thus, the minister

is one who passes on the commands of Jesus the commander of the Christian army (1 Timothy 4:10-11).

### **Take Heed to Yourself and the Doctrine**

Roberts points out that Paul was an aged man by the time he wrote this letter. Also, priests did not begin their work until age 30 and elders were not less than 50 years old. Thus, Timothy, perhaps now between 30 and 40, is still considered a youth. Rather than letting people despise his relatively young age, Timothy was told by Paul to be an example of a true believer in Christ. He would do this in watching the things he said and the way he conducted himself. He was also to be careful to display true love (John 13:34-35) and complete trust in God. In general, he was to keep his life free from sin (1 Timothy 4:12).

While Paul was in the process of trying to come to Timothy, he instructed the younger evangelist to pay close attention to what was being read, with a special

emphasis likely being placed on what was read from the pulpit or in assemblies. Exhortation is encouragement to do the things one has heard the scriptures direct. Teaching is instruction that educates as to the meaning of what has been read. It seems, after reading 2 Timothy 1:6, that Paul may have laid his hands on Timothy at the same time the elders did. If so, the gift mentioned here could be miraculous. However, it does not have to be miraculous since Romans 12:3-8 lists some things called gifts which do not have to be miraculously given. In fact, in this context, it appears that Paul is calling the duties Timothy has to fulfill a gift. His work may have been prophesied, like the work of Paul and Barnabas was prophesied (Acts 13:1-3). Then the elders' hands would be laid on him to set him apart for the work (1 Timothy 4:13-14).

Paul told him to give diligence and apply himself fully to the task that was before him, much like we say certain men live to hunt or fish. When a preacher makes

preaching his life, his growth will be evident to all. Timothy was to pay close attention to the way he lived as well as the things he taught. Just as the elders from Ephesus were first to watch out for their own spiritual condition and then the spiritual condition of the flock they oversaw, a good preacher must first see to it that he lives the Christian life before he tells others how to live. By thus watching how he lived and the way he taught, Paul assured Timothy he could save himself and those who heard his teaching (1 Timothy 4:15-16).

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss Paul's description of the false teachers who would bring about the coming apostasy.

2. What does it mean to be a good minister?

3. Discuss the points of interest you find in Paul's comparison to the athlete and the soldier.

4. How did Paul say Timothy could be an example and avoid having his younger age despised?

5. Describe the things Paul instructed Timothy to pay attention to while he attempted to come to him.

6. Why do you think Paul thought it important for elders and ministers to look out for their own spiritual well being before looking out for the rest of the flock?

#### Lesson 6

## The Christian and Family

1 Timothy 5:1-16

Relating to Christians like Family

Lipscomb says Paul, "admonishes Timothy not to rebuke or speak harshly to the aged men; but, if they commit wrong instead of reproving them in a censorious manner, entreat kindly or beseech them to turn from the wrong as a son would his father." Younger men that did wrong were to be approached in love as one would approach his brother (1 Timothy 5:1).

The church is a family, so older women who sinned were to be approached with the love and respect one would show his mother. Also, the younger women should be given the loving concern one would give his sister. No impure thought should be in mind when a preacher admonishes younger sisters (1 Timothy 5:2).

### **Various Types of Widows**

True widows were not to be embarrassed because the church refused to provide for their physical needs and left them in poverty. They should be shown respect and given the temporal relief they need. As will be

seen, widows in deed were those who did not have children or close relatives who should provide for them. Children and grandchildren should be taught the proper love and care for their widowed mothers and grandmothers. By providing for needy mothers, children are repaying, in part, the years of loving care given to them while they were helpless children unable to face the world alone (1 Timothy 5:3-4).

The widow indeed is the one who has no relatives to support her and is in need. She has set her hope on God and turns to him regularly in prayer. In contrast to the widow worthy of the church's support, Paul described a widow who gave herself to the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Such a widow would be trying to support a physical body which housed a spiritual corpse. The apostle wanted all these teachings presented to the church so there would be no avenue for reproach to be brought upon God's people (1 Timothy 5:5-7).

## **Providing for Christian Widows**

Children and grandchildren who did not care for their widowed mothers or other close relatives who might even have lived in their own houses denied the faith. In fact, they were worse than unbelievers because they did not show honor for God by properly honoring their parents. Any Christian can and should be cared for if they are truly in need (Galatians 6:10). However, Paul had in mind a list of widows who should be cared for by the church on a regular basis until their death. To be on this list, a widow had to be at least 60 years old and have been faithful to God's marriage law. She might have been previously widowed and remarried, but she could not have lived with more than one husband at a time. She should have been known for her good works, such as, her rearing of children, receiving guests into her home and giving them lodging (Acts 16:15), washing the feet of weary saints at the end of a hard day's travel, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving water to the thirsty, visiting those sick and in

prison and generally being involved in good works (1 Timothy 5:8-10).

The meaning of 1 Timothy 5:11 is somewhat difficult to ascertain. However, it surely does not mean it is wrong for a widow younger than 60 to remarry, as coming verses will clearly indicate. It may be that widows enrolled to be permanently cared for by the church made a pledge to work for the Lord. Paul was concerned the desires of younger widows might eventually rage out of control, which is the meaning of the word "wanton." Their embarrassment over being on the permanent role and a desire to get married might lead them to marry a pagan and be disloyal to their confession of Christ and submitting to him in baptism (compare 1 Corinthians 7:39).

Younger widows would almost certainly still have the energy to care for a home and family. If the church put them on constant support, they would have a tendency to become lazy, wander from house to house,

carry idle stories that were destructive either because they were false or because they only served to tear down the character of others and look into things of others that were none of their business. So, the apostle said it was better for the younger widows to marry a Christian man, bear children and care for a household in general. While a man goes about the daily business of earning a living, a woman is directing the affairs at home. Thus, she is said to rule because she is in control of the things that go on there. Of course, she would still love her husband and be subject to him, but someone has to make decisions at home. Thus, she would stay busy doing a good work and give no opportunity to Satan by involving herself in the things described as being brought on by idleness (1 Timothy 5:12-14).

Apparently they had already seen some fall prey to the ways of the devil and bring reproach upon the church. Perhaps the directions of verse 8 would have, by themselves, allowed some women to feel they had no

obligation toward their widowed mothers and grandmothers. Just in case, Paul went on to plainly state that the Christian woman has the same obligation as the man in Christ (1 Timothy 5:15-16).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss how thinking of fellow Christians as family members would impact your attitudes and approaches to them.

2. What is God's plan for the care of widows in one's family?

3. Briefly relate Paul's view of various types of widows.

4. Describe the circumstances under which Paul said the church should care for a widow.

5. Give reasons Paul did not want the church to permanently care for widows under 60.

## Lesson 7

# Other Christian Relationships

1 Timothy 5:17-6:2

## Giving Proper Honor to Elders

Elders rule, or direct the affairs of the church, under the chief shepherd, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:1-5). They should not be forced to earn their living as well. Any elder who did a good job in tending the flock would be worthy of double honor and especially those who also were involved in preaching and teaching the word. Remember, we saw in 1 Timothy 5:3 that the word “honor” suggests respect and temporal relief. Paul goes on to cite Deuteronomy 25:4 to prove elders should receive pay. The same verse was used by Paul in reference to a preacher's right to be supported in the preaching of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:1-14). Clearly, it could be said elders are worthy of financial support

when they labor as overseers of the flock (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

Anyone in a position of leadership is subject to criticism. Paul made it plain that the man of God is not to listen to those who would accuse an elder of sinful actions, unless the incident can be confirmed by two or three witnesses. Actually, this is the respect which is due any brother (Matthew 18:15-17) and it is certainly due an elder. When a leader is found in sin, he must be rebuked just like any other member. Rebuking a leader shows that all are equal under Christ and should cause all Christians to fear violating God's will. Paul solemnly charged Timothy in the presence of God, Christ and the faithful angels who serve God. Remember, some angels were involved in rebellion (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). Other references make it clear that angels observe things going on in the church and with Christians (Luke 15:10; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Corinthians 4:9). Since God is no respecter of persons, anyone who is hearing charges against one of

His people should also be unbiased (Acts 10:34). The man of God cannot afford to favor someone just because they are good friends or are part of the same clique. In fact, he should not become a part of a clique for that very reason (1 Timothy 5:19-21).

One can lay hands on a man because he is accused (Acts 4:3). This could be a reference to accusations against an elder, in which case, the latter part of the verse would go on to require Timothy to go ahead and rebuke those who had been fully proved to be in sin. However, the laying on of hands may also refer to the appointment of elders (compare Acts 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). It was certainly the job of an evangelist to appoint elders in every church (Titus 1:5). If this is the meaning here, the last part of the verse would indicate the process of selecting elders should be carefully carried out. Timothy would not want to have been a part of placing a man in the office of a bishop who was wicked when such could have been known if the time to check things out had have been allowed (1

Timothy 5:22).

### **Further Instructions Concerning Proper Christian Conduct**

There can be no doubt that Timothy refrained from drinking any wine, because of what the apostle wrote to him in 1 Timothy 5:23. Paul urged him not to go to the extreme of refusing wine as a medicine when he was sick. Apparently, in an effort to keep himself pure, as Paul enjoined, Timothy had drunk water only (R.S.V.). However, Paul permitted the use of wine as a medicine for stomach trouble.

Some men's sins are quite evident because they openly participate in them. Others sin quietly so that it is very hard to ascertain the type of character they really have. Similarly, the good works of some men are seen by all around them. When one does involve himself in wickedness, even secretly, it will be seen in time (1 Timothy 5:24-25).

There were millions of slaves in the Roman empire at the time Paul wrote this letter. Those converted to Christ were urged to be good servants giving proper respect to their masters. If they were offered their freedom, they should certainly take it and only be a slave to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:21-24). If they remained in a man's service, they should submit to their masters as to the Lord (Colossians 3:22-24). Some might think of making their work look good on the surface while in reality doing a half-hearted job, but Christians serve the Lord in everything they do (1 Timothy 6:1; Ephesians 6:5-8).

It was possible for a Christian to be a master of slaves, as in the case of Philemon (Philemon 8-16). Further, he might have slaves who became Christians, as in the case of Onesimus. Such slaves might reason that we are all one in Christ and there is neither bond nor free (Galatians 3:28). In the spiritual sense, they would have been correct, but spiritual relations do not change

physical relations entirely. Wives must still be subject to their own husbands and slaves must be subject to their masters. Now, as Paul went on to say, it should be a greater joy to work under someone and benefit them through your service because a fellow Christian, brother, receives the good from the work you perform (1 Timothy 6:2).

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the characteristics of a shepherd which should be evident in a good elder.

2. Under what circumstances would it be appropriate to criticize an elder?

3. What do you think about when you read Paul's words in 1 Timothy 5:22?

4. Why do you think Paul had to urge Timothy to drink a little wine?

5. Describe Paul's instructions to slaves who were converted to Christ.

6. Describe Paul's instructions to those Christians who were masters of slaves.

## Lesson 8

# The Christian and Money

1 Timothy 6:3-21

### The Identity and Teaching of False Teachers

False teachers can be identified through their teaching, which is different from the true words of Jesus. Any modification of Christ's teaching makes it different and unacceptable in God's eyes (Galatians 1:6-9). Paul uses the word "wholesome," which is similar to our word "healthy," to describe spiritually healthy words about Jesus which would urge the hearers to godliness. In contrast, the false teacher is so conceited as to believe his reasoning and words are better than the Lord's. In reality, he does not know anything he needs

to know. The false teacher's greatest pleasure was not in teaching the truth but in arguing about words and questions with which the Lord had not dealt.

Unfortunately, that kind of discussion only leads to envy, angry contention, speaking evil of others and sick imaginations of minds weakened by sin. Such discussions also lead to incessant quarreling and bad feelings that go on and on. Once one has corrupted the word of God it is easy to go on and allow one's own mind to be corrupted. They had possessed the truth but had allowed their own speculations and arguing to rob them of the truth. They then began to preach things that would produce great personal wealth without regard to the truth. They called their preaching godliness only to make the best possible profit (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

### **The Truth About Riches**

Paul said being God like and content with the state in

which one finds himself leads to the richest rewards (Philippians 4:11-12). Jesus urged his followers to seek the best interests of God and his kingdom first and all the material things they truly needed would be provided (1 Timothy 6:6; Matthew 6:25-34).

Those who spend their lives trying to amass a material fortune will be disappointed to find that none of those things can be taken to the grave or beyond. Babies enter the world with nothing, not even clothes, and everyone leaves the world as he came. Any blessings God gives us beyond food and clothing are beyond our basic needs and should be received with thankfulness (1 Timothy 6:7-8).

Those who seek material wealth are like an animal in a trap. Instead of wanting what is best for them, they lust after things that will ultimately only bring them hurt. Seekers of material wealth are compared by Paul to a swimmer tired of fighting the current who is at last pulled under to his death. In the end, his uncontrolled

desires will lead to the utter ruin of body and soul (1 Timothy 6:9).

After observing the previously mentioned facts, it is no wonder that Paul said the love of money is the root of all evil. Those who devote all their efforts to this god will invariably leave the faith of Christ behind and will find themselves with a painful conscience from all the wrong they did to get more while at the same time feeling miserable because they do not possess even greater wealth (1 Timothy 6:10).

#### **Confessing the Good Confession**

The man devoted to God's service will run away from material greed and pursue God's will. He will display reverence toward God, trust in God's word by obeying his will, show love for God and others in all his pursuits, endure difficulties with God at his side, and maintain a gentle spirit. To accomplish all this, one will have to be ready to carry on the struggle against Satan and selfish desires constantly (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Though already saved from past sins (Acts 2:38), the Christian must remain true to his calling if he would receive the ultimate salvation in heaven. The call goes out to all but is only answered by those who would obey the Lord (Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 8:28; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3; Acts 22:16). When confession is so closely tied to teachings about salvation, it must have reference to the confession of Christ as God's Son which is made at baptism (1 Timothy 6:11-12; Acts 8:37).

Paul went on to remind Timothy of the seriousness of living the Christian life. After all, God, the one who sustains life, is watching and so is Jesus. Jesus made the confession that he was the Son of God in the face of death itself (John 18:36-37). Just as Jesus confessed his Sonship in front of Pilate, though it endangered his life, Timothy was to keep confessing Jesus as God's Son and the one to be obeyed. To do this, his life should be free from sins that would put a blot on the name of the Lord. This is to be done until

the Lord appears again, which he and other messengers from God had foretold (John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28). Just as Jesus was born at the time appointed by God, he will come again at the time God has appointed (Matthew 24:36). The description "King of kings and Lord of Lords" could be used of the Father or the Son without doing damage to either the text or the truth (1 Timothy 6:13-15; Deuteronomy 10:17; Daniel 2:47; Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

Jesus has immortality from the Father and is the only source of it for us (Romans 6:9; John 5:21, 26). He now dwells in heaven and cannot be physically approached by any man. He has never been seen by man as sovereign God, though he did come to earth and take the form of a man (Philippians 2:5-8). He is due respect because of his eternal power (1 Timothy 6:16).

### **Instructions for the Rich**

Paul gave the young preacher special instructions to pass on to the rich. First, they should not be overly proud of their wealth because riches are temporary and can disappear in short order (Matthew 6:19-21). Second, they should place their trust in God who is actually the source of all that we have (Acts 17:24-26). It is a temptation for the rich to believe they have earned all they have, but Paul makes it clear God is the source of our blessings (1 Timothy 6:17; compare Philippians 4:19; Mark 10:29-30).

Christians, especially rich ones, are to be ready to do good when the opportunity presents itself (Galatians 6:9-10). The greatest happiness comes not in material wealth but in being rich in doing good for others. Rich Christians should be anxious to distribute to the needs of those around them and even to send, or communicate, to those missionaries or others in need far away. Instead of hoarding up physical wealth, they should focus on doing good deeds that will in effect be laying up a foundation for them in eternity. Eternal life

is the true and lasting life (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

### **Closing Thoughts**

Paul closed his letter with the appeal of a father to his son. He asked him to protect the truth entrusted to his care. He especially asked him to refuse the so-called knowledge of the false teachers, which was in reality just a bunch of empty talk. Others who had joined the false teachers in their error had turned aside from the revealed will of God. Paul's closing prayer for Timothy was that the grace of God would be with him (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Briefly describe the false teacher and the problems he creates.

2. Describe some of the actions one might take to develop contentment.

3. Describe the negative impact of loving money and being obsessed with accumulating things and wealth.

4. Tell the circumstances under which Jesus confessed before Pilate. How should this example impact the lives of those who follow Jesus?

5. List the lessons Paul said needed to be taught to those who are rich in this world.

6. Paul loved Timothy as a son in the faith. Tell the

things this love moved him to teach Timothy.

## Lesson 9

# Knowing Who We Have Believed

2 Timothy 1:1-18

### Greetings

That God's will and his commandment are one and the same can be seen by comparing the opening words of the first and second letters to Timothy. Further, such comparison will remind that the Christian's hope is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Paul may have considered Timothy his son because he helped him learn and obey the gospel. He loved him because of the close relationship they had in the gospel. Paul treated

Timothy like a son by training him to carry out the important task of preaching the truth. His prayer for him was that he would receive God's unmerited favor, tender mercy and unsurpassed peace of mind. All of these come from the Father and Son (2 Timothy 1:1-2).

### **Timothy's Faith and Family History**

Paul served God, as his fathers had, with a pure, or clear conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:16). The apostle's actions were always in accord with that which he believed to be right. He never stopped giving thanks to God for Timothy. In fact, he remembered him night and day and this led to thanksgiving. Paul joyfully looked forward to seeing him again. This was especially true because of the tears Timothy had shed in his behalf. Paul was also thankful when he thought of Timothy's sincere faith. Faith in God had first been displayed in the life of his grandmother, Lois, and then his mother, Eunice. They had taught him from

childhood as 3:15 would indicate (2 Timothy 1:3-5).

It appears Timothy's fire may have needed to be stirred to keep a full blaze going, since Guthrie quotes Abbott-Smith, who says the Greek word for "stir up" can mean "either 'to kindle afresh' or 'to keep in full flame.'" This writer does not know what gift is spoken of here but we can be sure that any gift from God is intended to be used to further the cause of Christ. It should also be observed that it was up to Timothy to so conduct himself as to keep the gift burning bright and useful in his life. As with all Christians, the gift of God helps man to change his inward character, or spirit. We are not fearful, because man can really do nothing to harm us (Matthew 10:28). Through Christ, we have power to do all things and overcome infirmities and persecutions (Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10). We also receive the gift of love that we so desperately needed (Romans 5:6-8). Finally, our inward spirit is turned toward self control (1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:13-14). Notice, it is the love of

Christ that helps us hold ourselves back from the things we ought not to do (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

### **Paul Was Not Ashamed of the Gospel**

Part of Paul's ability to be content in whatever state he was in must have come from the view expressed in 2 Timothy 1:8 (Philippians 4:11; Ephesians 3:1; 4:1). He was not Nero's or Rome's prisoner, but the Lord's. Wherever he was, he was serving his Master and striving to further the cause of the gospel. Christians have an internal character, as discussed in the previous verse, which allows them to not be ashamed of the gospel or our Lord. Timothy was also told, by Paul, not to be ashamed of him, as if some pressure would be put on him to do just that. Jesus suffered so that we might be saved. We can expect to suffer if we stand up for the righteousness of God. When we are suffering for the right, we can know that God's power is there to sustain us (1 Peter 4:16-19).

All those in Christ have been saved from their past sins by God's precious gift (2 Peter 1:9). We were saved when we accepted God's calling through our obedience (compare Acts 2:21, 37-38, 41; 22:16). Our salvation is not earned through works that we do but is bestowed upon us as a gift. Ephesians 2:8-10 makes this clear while at the same time showing us that God intends for our lives to be centered on doing good works. God planned, even before the world began, to extend the gift of salvation to man in Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10; 3:10-11). For centuries God's plan for man's salvation was hidden (Romans 16:25-26). When Jesus appeared on the earth and carried out his purpose, God's plan of salvation was made known. When Jesus overcame the grave, he also overthrew death by taking away its sting (1 Corinthians 15:51-57). The way of life immortal had been pitch dark until the light of the Son's resurrection and his glorious gospel fully illuminated the way (2 Timothy 1:9-10).

Paul went forth as a herald, or proclaimer, for the king

to tell the lost of Christ's saving power. He was sent by the king himself, as the word "apostle" shows. His specific charge was to instruct the Gentiles in the way of salvation (Acts 9:15; 26:16-18). Paul was persecuted and imprisoned because he was carrying out the instructions of his commander. He was not ashamed of his suffering because he had complete trust in Jesus Christ. Roberts says the apostle went on to say, "He is able to keep my commitment." He could have meant the Lord was able to keep his charge to preach the gospel or he could have meant his soul. Both ideas are correct and it is actually possible Paul had both in mind. Christ's word will not fail (Matthew 24:36), nor will he leave his faithful servants in the grave (1 Corinthians 15:22-23). We can know that Jesus will always be with us if we are faithfully carrying out his command to teach all nations (2 Timothy 1:11-12).

### **An Injunction to Steadfastness**

The apostle urged Timothy to hold tight to the “pattern of sound words.” The word translated “pattern” is the Greek word *hupo-tuposis*. Joseph Thayer, in his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, says this word means, “the pattern placed before one to be held fast and copied, model.” Paul had given Timothy a clear model of sound teachings from which he should not stray. The way to do that was through hearing the word of God and doing what it says to do out of a love for lost souls. As Paul thought of his own approaching death, the importance of men like Timothy preserving the good news in the form God delivered it naturally became a vital matter. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the penmen to write would help Timothy keep the gospel pure (2 Timothy 1:13-14).

When Paul used the expression, “all those in Asia,” he likely was using hyperbole, or an exaggeration for emphasis. We use these often. For example, one might say, “I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.” Paul’s point is that none from Asia, which was so near by,

had come to his defense during his trial in Rome. In fact, the aged apostle used the word "deserted" to describe their actions. For some reason, he singled out the two men named as being among the deserters. Perhaps they led others into such actions (2 Timothy 1:15).

In stark contrast to those who deserted him, Onesiphorus had been like a cool breeze under a shade tree for an over-heated traveler, which is the idea behind the word "refreshed." This kind brother had not been ashamed of the apostle's chains in prison. Thus, Paul expressed his desire that the entire house of Onesiphorus obtain mercy. He had put forth a great deal of effort to find the imprisoned apostle. Paul's specific desire for this helpful brother was that he would find mercy in the day of judgment. Timothy was well aware of how helpful Onesiphorus had been in Ephesus and from the above statements would likely conclude that he had continued in the same manner (2 Timothy 1:16-18).



3. Discuss how Paul's point of view may have helped him get through difficult times.

4. What has the Christian committed to Christ and in what way is the Lord able to keep it?

5. Describe those who had deserted and aided Paul during his trial in Rome.

Lesson 10

# The Duties of a Faithful Minister

2 Timothy 2:1-13

## A Minister's Duty to Be Strong

After telling Timothy of the two contrasting attitudes of brethren toward God's message bearer, Paul urged him to be strong like Onesiphorus. Remember, God gives the Christian a spirit of power and not of fear (1:7).

Our power is found in God's unmerited favor which is found in our Lord (2 Timothy 2:1; compare John 15:4-5).

A part of being strong would be the further spreading of the gospel. Timothy had heard the truth proclaimed by Paul. The witnesses to this fact could either be those who heard the truth at the same time Timothy did, or they could be other sources proclaiming the same truth, as in 3:15. In either case, the young preacher was instructed by Paul to place the gospel trust in the hands of men who would be loyal to the truth and, in turn, pass the trust on to others (2 Timothy 2:2).

#### **Different Images of a Minister's Life**

If Timothy was to pass along the gospel, he would have to be prepared to suffer persecution, self denial and the onslaught of the enemy like a soldier on active duty. Guthrie says Paul is telling Timothy that he will have to take his share of suffering. He went on to use the image of a soldier loaded down with items not pertaining to his warfare. When it came time to draw his sword, he would find it tangled up in the things he is carrying and could not have it drawn when the fight

began. All Christians need to keep a constant watch on their involvement in the things of this world. Of course, we need to work to provide for our own, for example, but such work should never entangle our sword, or God's word, and prevent us from using it to defeat Satan. Our overriding concern should be to please the Savior, who is also our commander (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

Just as an athlete competing in the Olympic games must abide by the rules if he would be declared the winner, the Christian must pursue the goal of heaven along the course laid out by the Master. Followers of Christ are also like the farmer who works hard to produce a crop and gets to enjoy the fruits of his labor. Those believers who work hard to teach others the will of God will find themselves becoming the first beneficiary of laboring with God's word (2 Timothy 2:5-6).

Paul urged Timothy to carefully consider the images he

presented. If he did so, the apostle said the Lord would help him gain a complete understanding of all things. Once anyone has grown in the knowledge of God's word, he needs God's help to have the wisdom to properly apply it to his life (2 Timothy 2:7; James 1:5).

### **Encouragement to Continue Despite Suffering**

The Christian's constant source of strength during times of trial is Jesus Christ. That he was a man is plainly seen in his being the seed of David (Romans 1:3-4; Jeremiah 23:5-6; I Timothy 2:5; 3:16). The enemies of the man, Jesus, put him to death and caused him to be laid in a tomb. However, as Paul declared in his preaching of the gospel, God raised him up (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Suffering Christians should remember Jesus' enemies could not ultimately defeat him, nor can ours, because God can raise the dead (2 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 12:1-2).

Paul was in prison chains as if he were a common criminal guilty of theft or robbery. While they could bind the Lord's messenger, they could not bind the Lord's message. Paul could still write the truth and thousands of others outside the prison walls could preach the message that sets men free. The apostle endured suffering so that all those who would obediently receive the gospel call would have an opportunity to hear (Romans 8:28; John 10:16; Acts 18:9-10). He also bore the pain so those who had already obeyed could receive the end of their hope, eternal life (2 Timothy 2:9-10; Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13).

There are two senses in which one can be dead with Christ. First, one dies to sin with Christ in baptism and is raised to live a new life (Romans 6:3-10). Second, one might also die with Christ under the persecution of the enemies of the cross. In such a case, one can be assured the Lord will raise him up to live with him in the resurrection (Philippians 1:21-23). Though a

Christian's enemies could cause him to suffer persecution or even death on earth, they could not prevent him from reigning with Christ in the hereafter. However, those who turned their backs on the Lord and denied him would find themselves being denied by the Son before the Father (Matthew 10:32-33). Though some might be unfaithful and fall back into unbelief, Paul promised God's Son would continue faithful (compare Hebrews 6:13-18; 2 Corinthians 1:18). Individual Christians might be unfaithful in their service to Christ, but the Lord will remain true and truthful forever (2 Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 1:2).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Explain what Paul expected faithful men to do with the gospel. What does that say to us?

2. Name some things that can entangle our sword and keep us from being good soldiers.

3. What everyday examples did Paul use to help

Timothy understand how to live his life for Christ?

What lessons do you learn from each?

4. How can Christ's experience encourage us in times of suffering?

5. What lessons can you find in 2 Timothy 2:9-13?

Lesson 11

# **The Minister's Response to Doctrinal Error**

2 Timothy 2:14-26

**Urgent Matters In the Midst of Doctrinal Error**

Paul charged his son in the gospel with reminding

those who would listen to him of the truths listed in the previous verses. Any charge placed before one with the reminder that the Lord is witnessing the proceedings should cause one to take the matter seriously. Useless arguments over things not revealed in scripture cannot be resolved to anyone's satisfaction and most often result in causing many of the listeners to have weakened by faith. In place of that, the faithful proclaimer of the word should "study," or give his all, to present himself in God's presence in an acceptable condition. This is done by being the best worker in God's service that one can be. The word translated "rightly dividing" literally means to cut a straight path. If one would have God's approval, he should cut a straight path through the gospel, or word of truth (2 Timothy 2:14-15; James 1:12).

The wise student of God's word will walk all the way around senseless arguments about words. Such only encourage those involved to be less like God. Much like a gangrene that eats at the flesh and infects the

bone, false doctrine and arguments about things that cannot be resolved poison the spiritual man. The church had already disciplined one such false teacher, Hymeneus (1 Timothy 1:20), yet he continued to dispense false doctrine. A part of his error, along with another man named Philetus, was the teaching that the resurrection was already past. Their doctrine had caused some to stray way from the truth (2 Timothy 2:16-18).

Despite the fact that some false teachers have ruined their own faith and taken others with them, God's foundation holds firm. Men used to put an inscription on the foundation stone of a new building. Paul uses that imagery to describe the foundation of our hope. First, we can be sure in the knowledge that God can readily identify his faithful people (compare Numbers 16:5). Second, those who have put on God's Son in baptism and wear his name should abandon all sinful ways (2 Timothy 2:19; compare Numbers 16:26; Isaiah 52:11).

## **A Call for Purity in the Midst of Doctrinal Error**

Some see believers in Christ living in a way completely dishonorable and reach the conclusion that there is something wrong with the church, or God's house. However, God's house has many different vessels in it that will all be used for God's purpose and to his glory. So, we should cleanse ourselves from every defilement, such as empty babblings, and be used by God for his glory and to our own. The Christian's purpose is to be a workman for God (2 Timothy 2:20-21; Ephesians 2:10).

Timothy, and all other Christians, were further warned by Paul against letting passions run wild. This, of course, could describe any type of unrestrained passion for power, sex, money, etc. Paul told him to pursue the ways of right living; be true to God's law, which is the way of faith; love for God and our fellow man; and live in peace with all others who are trying to do what

the Lord wants and keep their hearts free from sin. Timothy was also admonished to stay away from questions for which God did not reveal the answers. Disputes about such matters will only cause friction and division in the church (2 Timothy 2:22-23).

If one would help others to see the error of their ways, he would have to avoid involving himself in heated arguments. Instead, he would be compelled to exhibit the tender care of a nurse taking care of a sick child. Also, he would need to work to be a patient teacher who carefully listens to others and strives to more thoroughly instruct them. If the Lord's teacher will approach the false teachers with a gentle spirit and show them through teaching how they are acting against their own best interests, they might turn away from error and to the truth. Like a man who has been sleeping in an alcoholic stupor, the false teacher needed to wake up and escape the trap of Satan who had been holding this one captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).



3. What lessons do you find in Paul's discussion of the solid foundation in 2 Timothy 2:19?

4. What 2 types of vessels does God use in his service? How can we be sure to be in the better category?

5. How should a Christian act in his dealings with others, even those in error?

Lesson 12

# God's Minister in Perilous Times

2 Timothy 3:1-17

## A Description of the Coming Apostates

Paul told Timothy to keep in mind that during the Christian age times of great stress would come for the Christ's disciples. The great stress would come because of the attitudes men would display. They would turn from love for God to love of self and money. They would be proud, egotistical and use evil speech about others, especially God. They would so lack respect for authority that they would even be

disobedient toward their parents. A complete lack of gratitude would also characterize this wicked group. Things holy would be despised by them (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

Love for one's own parents, or children, should come naturally, but not for this group. Such would not favor peace under any circumstances and would falsely accuse others. No self-control would be visible in their lives. Instead, Paul foretold that they would rage like wild animals and hate anything good. Betraying someone for selfish gain would be commonplace with them. They would be rash, impulsive and puffed up with conceit. Basically, their desire was to be toward enjoyment of the moment more than toward pleasing God. Christians who have such attitudes might profess to follow God, but it would be clear he had no real influence in their lives. They would deny God's power by ignoring the directions he had revealed to them. Timothy was told to turn away from such people (2 Timothy 3:3-5).

## **The Work of Apostates**

The hypocritical men Paul had just described would sneak into the homes of the saints and take advantage of the unsuspecting nature of women. Particularly, the silly, or little or weak, women whose consciences are loaded down with sins and uncontrolled desires. It may be false teachers somehow promised them freedom from the guilt they felt. Whatever the case, they were able to lead them away like prisoners of war. Such women, and men who are like them, constantly crave new knowledge. So, they are ever listening for something new and never finding time to really understand the truth (2 Timothy 3:6-7).

Jannes and Jambres were two of the magicians who opposed Moses before Pharaoh. They used deception to make it appear that they were able to work the same miracles as the man of God (Exodus 7:11, 22). The false teachers Paul warned against were also resisting

God's truth. Their minds were destroyed by false teaching and the faith they had once had in God could no longer withstand the test and was not fit for anything. The false teachers of Paul's day would be exposed just as the magicians of Moses' day were. Remember that Moses' rod which became a snake devoured all of the snakes the magicians had used in their trickery (Exodus 7:12). Eventually, they could not even stand before Moses because of the plague of boils (2 Timothy 3:8-9; Exodus 9:11).

### **Power to Confront the Coming Apostasy**

Paul's life stood in contrast to the lives of the false teachers and should have served as an example to Timothy and others around him. His teaching was sound and in accord with the truth (Philippians 1:21). His goal was to reach heaven, so he remained faithful in keeping the Lord's will (Philippians 3:12-14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). He was patient with those who he

instructed, ever striving to help them reach the goal (1 Thessalonians 5:14). He had a true love for the Lord, his saints and the lost, as was manifest in the things he endured to preach. He remained steadfast in the fight against the devil. All who have read the New Testament will be aware of the persecution and suffering endured because he preached the gospel (2 Corinthians 11:23-27). It is apparent that the places and events mentioned by Paul were those Timothy had witnessed firsthand in Acts 13 and 14. Significantly, Paul says Timothy knew the Lord had delivered him out of every bad situation (2 Timothy 3:10-11).

The forces of Satan are going to oppose the forces of God (John 15:19; Matthew 10:22; Acts 14:22). If we claim to be trying to live a life with God's character being displayed in it and are not being persecuted, then we need to ask ourselves whose side we are really on. Spiritually sick men, like a malignant growth, tend to get worse as the days pass. Guthrie says the meaning here is that they have set a goal to be evil and are

making great progress toward their goal. They trick others and themselves into believing they are not really evil (2 Timothy 3:12-13).

To avoid the downward slide into evil, Paul urged Timothy to abide in the things he had been taught. Timothy already had experienced things that would assure him of the truthfulness of the instructions he received. He had learned these truths from his grandmother, mother, Paul and, most of all, scripture (1:5; 3:10). It would not be good to follow grandmother, mother or Paul if they did not point one to the scriptures. However, Timothy had been taught from the inspired writings of the Old Testament from the time he was a child (compare Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 11:19). Wisdom, or the ability to apply knowledge, is only available from God and he has placed it in his word. The Old Testament points one to Jesus as God's anointed and the one through whom salvation comes (2 Timothy 3:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Paul used the word for "scripture" which simply means writing, or, in this case, recorded divine truth. It would include all of the Old Testament books and the fifteen or so New Testament books which had already been written (see 2 Peter 3:15-16). These holy writings are the God breathed out word, or the actual words of God. They are useful in showing God's teaching, correcting of mistakes, restoring us to a right relationship with God and teaching us how to continue to do the things God wants us to do. Guthrie says the word hina, at the start of verse 17, means Paul is going to give the ultimate purpose of the things he had just written. He went on to say the word artios, which is translated perfect, "describes a man perfectly adapted for his task." The word for thoroughly furnished is another way of expressing the same idea and forcefully underscores the intent of sacred writings, which is to prepare a man to do every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss Paul's description of those who would be apostate.

2. Describe the type of person who Paul says would be subject to being led astray.

3. Tell the story of Jannes and Jambres and explain

how the false teachers were like them.

4. Describe the things Paul endured to preach the gospel and the approach he took to those he taught.

5. In a day when so many suggest there is no

standard of right and wrong, what encouragement do you think Paul would give to us?

Lesson 13

# A Final Charge and Closing Thoughts

2 Timothy 4:1-22

## A Charge to Timothy

According to Thomas, the word charge means, "to testify earnestly, warn, adjure." The serious nature of this charge can be seen in Paul's calling upon the Father and Son as witnesses. Christ will judge both those who are dead and those yet alive at the time of his return (John 5:22-23, 28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:10). When Jesus comes again, he will be in the middle of his final acts as king and preparing to deliver the kingdom to his Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-26). Paul charged Timothy to herald, or proclaim, God's word to all men at all times. The herald should be ready with

his message whether people are receptive or not. This will mean the preacher will have to exhibit a readiness to confront people about their wicked ways and try to convince them of their errors. Then, he will also have to warn against wrongdoing and urge them to stop sinning. This should be followed by an earnest urging to do what is right. All of this can only be accomplished through patient preaching of God's truth. Like Moses, preachers sometimes face situations where they are tempted to add a few words of their own. Such should be resisted since, as was seen in 3:16-17, God's word is fully able to direct us in the right paths (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

Paul said the day was coming when some would not readily listen to healthy teaching. Instead, they would collect a group of teachers who would say what they wanted them to say, thereby scratching their ears. The words of false prophets sound good to their ears but go no deeper (Isaiah 30:9-10). Determined to satisfy their own desires, the people would look for teachers

who would approve of their excesses instead of warning against them. Spain says the word for "turn away" literally means to reject. They would reject God's true will and begin to accept all manner of made up stories. Instead of preaching what people wanted to hear, Paul urged Timothy to exercise self-control, which would avoid desires outside of God's will. Because of his faithfulness to the truth, Timothy would have to suffer persecution (John 15: 18-19). He was urged to keep on openly proclaiming the truth until he had finished his mission (2 Timothy 4:3-5; Luke 9:62).

### **Paul's Farewell Address**

As Paul saw the end of his life approaching, he said, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering," which is an allusion to the drink offering poured out on the altar under the law of Moses (see Numbers 15:1-10). So sure was Paul of his coming death that he spoke of it as already taking place. Using another figure, he said he was being loosed from the harness

like a weary animal at the end of a hard trip or day of ploughing (2 Timothy 4:6; Philippians 1:21-23).

Using the image of either an olympic contest or a great battle, Paul also said he had overcome the obstacles placed in front of him in the contest with Satan over the faith (1 Timothy 6:12). He also had run the race of life in accord with the rules laid out by the Lord (1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Hebrews 12:1-15). Further, the apostle said he had been a faithful steward who properly kept that with which the Lord entrusted him (Acts 9:15; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5). Since Paul had done the Lord's will, he could confidently say a victory crown awaited him (James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10). The crown was the reward for living in accord with the Lord's will which ultimately is available because of the Lord's supreme sacrifice. It will be given to the faithful by the Lord who judges truly in contrast to earthly judges like those Paul faced. The crown will be given to the righteous, who have anxiously awaited the Lord's return (1 Corinthians 16:22; Revelation 22:20),

in the very day the Lord comes again (2 Timothy 4:7-8; John 5:28-29).

### **Paul's Desire for Companionship**

Paul asked Timothy to make it his business to come to him as soon as he possibly could. Demas loved the world instead of the Lord's coming, so he forsook the Lord's servant. Both Crescens and Titus were apparently on business for the Lord, since no unfavorable remark is made about them. According to the A. S. V., Crescens was in Gaul, or France, which is an alternate reading for Galatia in other translations. Timothy was in Dalmatia, a part of Illyricum which was across the Adriatic Sea from Rome (2 Timothy 4:9-10).

Luke frequently traveled with Paul and was the only one who remained with the apostle at the time of this writing. Paul's desire for Timothy to bring John Mark is a remarkable example of the changes which can occur in one's life. Mark had left Paul and Barnabas at

Pamphylia on the first missionary journey. Paul refused to take such a deserter with them on a second journey (Acts 13:13; 15:37-40). However, by the time the apostle pens these words to Timothy, he describes John Mark as profitable, which is the same word he used for vessel unto honor in 2:21 (2 Timothy 4:11).

Tychicus, who Paul says he sent to Ephesus, was the man who carried the apostle's letters to Ephesus and Colossae (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7). He was in Paul's company in Acts 20:4 and is mentioned in Titus 3:12. Roberts says the Greek tense here is epistolary and suggests Paul "is now sending him," so it may be that he took this letter to Timothy and stayed at Ephesus in his absence. With winter approaching, Paul asked Timothy to stop in Troas and get his coat from Carpus. While he was being held prisoner, Paul also wanted something on which to work, so he asked Timothy to bring books and parchments. If the parchments did not already contain writing, the apostle to the Gentiles may have been planning to do some

writing (2 Timothy 4:12-13).

Since Alexander was a fairly common name, it is difficult to tell which one Paul is speaking of in 2 Timothy 4:14-15. For instance, there was an Alexander associated with the high priest in Acts 4:6. Another was the son of Simon, who bore the cross of Christ (Mark 15:21). Yet another spoke to the multitude at Ephesus, while still one more made a shipwreck of his faith (Acts 19:30-41; 1 Timothy 1:20). The man mentioned by Paul in this verse could have been any of these, or one not mentioned in any other verse. No matter who he was, Paul viewed him as a threat to preachers of the gospel because he had so strongly opposed the apostle's preaching. In these verses, Paul gives us a good example of our treatment of and thinking about our enemies. He leaves it to the Lord to repay this man for his deeds in the day of judgment (Romans 12:17).

**The Lord Stood with Paul**

Though we do not know precisely when he made his first answer to the charges pressed against him, it is sad to hear this great man of God had not one friend to stand by him at that time. It appears the friends who refused to stand with Paul were afraid, so the apostle prayed the great judge would not hold it against them (2 Timothy 4:16).

Despite having no man to stand beside him, Paul was not alone. The Lord stood with his aged apostle just as he promised he would (Matthew 10:19-20; 28:18-20). In fact, he gave him strength to go through the first defense. Ironically, his enemies had placed him in a position, with the Lord's help, to present the gospel to a large audience of Gentiles as they listened to the trial in the forum. Those assembled might well have come from all over the known world. Though Paul soon expected to die, he had already been delivered by the Lord from a severe trial. Like the apostle, all Christians can confidently say the Lord will deliver them

out of every trial because death could not hold our King (Romans 8:28-39; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)! Only a Christian can think of death as a means of victory. When his tormentors at last succeeded in getting him executed, they gave Paul his longed for opportunity to go home (2 Timothy 4:17-18; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8-9).

### **Closing Thoughts**

Paul sent greetings to his tentmaking friends, Prisca and Aquila, who did so much to further the gospel (Acts 18:1-3; 24-28; Romans 16:3-5). Erastus, a companion who helped preach the gospel, stayed in Corinth, perhaps even making it his home (Acts 19:22). Trophimus was an Asiatic Christian who made the journey with Paul to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey. He was one of the Gentiles Paul was accused of taking into the temple (Acts 21:28-29). Paul had left him sick at Miletus, which shows us the

miraculous gifts the apostles possessed were not used for personal purposes but for the furtherance of the gospel.

Paul knew he would soon die and urged Timothy to come before winter. Travel in the winter was extremely difficult. If Timothy did not reach Paul before winter, he might have to wait another season. In spite of the persecution the church was enduring at the time of this writing, Paul was able to name several specific Christians and then the brethren in general as those who sent greetings to Timothy.

Paul's final written prayer was that Jesus would be with the spirit of Timothy, a fine gospel preacher. The "you" in the closing words of the prayer is plural and may well be the apostle's prayer for the church with which Timothy was working, likely Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:19-22).

### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss Paul's charge to Timothy and how important it is for preachers today.

2. What steps could you take to insure that you can make a similar statement to Paul's in 2 Timothy 4:6-8?

3. Describe the various people Paul listed when he thought of companionship. Which one, or ones, would you most like to be compared to? Which would you least like to be compared to?

4. What comfort can you find in Paul's statements about the Lord's support in his time of trial?

5. After considering Paul's prayer for Timothy, list some things you can ask God to do for your brethren.

## Lesson 14

# Titus and His Task on Crete

Titus 1:1-5

### **Paul, A Servant of God**

The Greeks had two words for slave. One was used for someone captured in battle and forced into slavery. The other described those born into slavery. Paul used the latter when he called himself a servant of God (Titus 1:1a). James uses the same words in James 1:1. Jesus described Moses as a servant of God (Revelation 15:3). It is especially appropriate for Christians to think of themselves as slaves. When we are born to walk in newness of life, we change masters from Satan to righteousness (Romans 6:3-4,

16-18). We are God's slaves because he bought us with the price of his own Son's blood (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Paul was commissioned by Christ to carry the good news to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). His purpose was to further the cause of Christ and help God's people grow in faith and knowledge (Romans 1:5-6). He wanted to spread the truth which was associated with godliness. Other truth, for instance from the fields of math and science, could be taught by others. Such preaching is grounded in the hope of eternal salvation. It comes out of the plan God made even before he formed the world (2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 16:25; Colossians 1:26). That plan had been made known in the church (Ephesians 1:9-11; 3:8-11). Its truth was assured by the fact that it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:1b-3; Hebrews 6:18).

### **Titus**

Titus is one of those people many of us would like to meet. Little is written about him, but what is written commends him. He was born of Gentile parents (Galatians 2:1-3). He was a traveling companion of Paul. Like Timothy, Titus is described by Paul as his true son in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4). The apostle sent him to Corinth during a troubled time. Paul was anxious over the report he would bring back. In fact, he left Troas despite the open door he found there (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).

When they met in Macedonia, Paul received comfort from God in the form of Titus' words. The apostle rejoiced in the way they had refreshed the young preacher. Their response to loving instruction had confirmed the things he had earlier told Titus. Titus grew to love and appreciate

them for their obedience (7:6-7, 13-16). Paul urged him to return with the second letter to complete the good work he had begun at Corinth (8:6, 16-18, 23). He described Titus as a partner and fellow worker.

Paul also sent him on a mission to Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10). He left him in Crete to help the church with things lacking. When the job was finished, the aging apostle wanted him to meet him in Nicopolis (Titus 1:5; 3:12). Paul's prayer for Titus was that he would receive grace, mercy and peace from God (Titus 1:4).

### **Crete and Titus' Task**

This young preacher was left by Paul on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5). Crete is the largest and southernmost of the Greek islands. At 3,200 square miles, it is about half the size of New Jersey. It is 160 miles from east to west. From north to south, the island is from 6 to 35 miles in width. The northern coast provides good natural harbor. Much of the southern coast has mountains rising up from the sea. At its center is Cape Lithinos, the most southerly point of Crete. Immediately east is the bay known as Fair Havens.

Crete was annexed by Rome in 67 B. C. It was combined with Cyrene to form one province. Because of its geographic location, Crete was exposed to a wide variety of influences. The Greek islands were used almost like stepping stones for traffic moving from Asia Minor to Greece. There was a temple of Bacchus on this island famed for its wine. The people were known for drunkenness and trickery. The Cretans had a reputation for

lying, as Paul makes clear in 1:12.

Titus was left on the island with the specific mission of setting things right. Several problems are dealt with in the epistle that were likely on Paul's mind when he wrote these words. Clearly, Paul must have been on Crete with Titus at one time. Likely this occurred after he was released from his first Roman imprisonment. In addition to providing the things they were lacking, Titus was to appoint elders. These were to be in every city, among the hundreds in Crete, where the gospel had spread.

Jews from Crete were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). Some may have obeyed the gospel and taken the seed home when they returned. On his journey to Rome, Paul spent some time in Fair Havens. The text does not tell us whether he got to go ashore. Because the Fast was already past, we know it was the fall of the year. Paul advised them to winter there. The ship's owner and helmsman insisted they try to reach Phoenix, a harbor some fifty miles west of the bay. Luke details the tragic choice they made (Acts 27).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. In what sense are Christians slaves? How should that impact our lives?

2. List the lessons you learn from Paul's brief discussion of the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:1-3).

3. Briefly relate the things you know about Titus.

4. Give a brief description of the island of Crete.

5. In view of Titus' special mission on Crete, discuss how important it is for churches today to develop and appoint elders.

Lesson 15

# Appointing Elders and Dealing With False Teachers

Titus 1:6-16

## **Qualifications of Elders**

Each man Titus appointed to serve as an elder was to be above reproach (Titus 1:6). Such included being the faithful husband of one wife. He could not be single or divorced and remarried for any cause other than fornication (Matthew 19:3-9). His children must have obeyed God's word. They could not be involved in wasteful living

without self control (Ephesians 5:18; Luke 15:13). Neither were they to be unwilling to submit to authority (1 Timothy 1:9).

It should be noted that Paul considered the word bishop to be interchangeable with elder. In fact, in Acts 20:17, he called for the elders from Ephesus to meet him at Miletus. Yet, he said it was their job to "oversee" the flock, which comes from the word translated bishop here. These men were overseeing God's flock, so it was important they faithfully handle their responsibility (compare 1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

If the church is to go forward, it cannot afford to have a leader who always insists on having his own way (2 Peter 2:10). He must be able to govern himself. Therefore, he must not be quick tempered, a drunkard, violent or greedy for money acquired in dishonest ways (Titus 1:7). Instead, he must exhibit deep concern for the needs of others. His home must always be open to the stranger (Titus 1:8). His goods should be available to help widows and orphans (Hebrews 13:2; James 1:27). God's leader loves good things (Philippians 1:10). He is a thoughtful man who constantly displays self control.

Elders should be upright in their treatment of their fellow men (Acts 10:22). This is certainly appropriate for the one who loves God and strives to imitate his holy nature (1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 John 4:7-11). The elder will be wise and moderate in his use of all things (1 Corinthians 9:25).

### **Holding Fast The Truth**

Elders will cling to the truth, even in the face of strong

opposition (Titus 1:9). They are ministers of the word, as the words "able to teach" would indicate (1 Timothy 3:2). Of course, Paul is speaking of wholesome, reliable words (1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:1-2). They must be skilled at teaching those in error the ways of righteousness. To do this, an elder would have to know the word of God. He must be able to use it to convince the false teacher of his errors. An answer must especially be given to those who speak against the truth.

Paul describes the specific false teachers of whom he is speaking in Titus 1:10. They were rebellious. They spoke empty words intended to deceive (2 Peter 2:18). This was particularly true of those who taught the necessity of circumcision for those in Christ. Such teachers had often created problems for Paul. Titus would have been well aware of the problem (Galatians 2:1-5, 11-16). If one could have been justified by the law of Moses, there would have been no need for the death of Christ. However, none could live perfectly. The law had no sacrifice that could remove sin, so Christ had to die for us (Hebrews 10:1-10). Our freedom, then, is in Christ, not Moses' law (Galatians 5:1-6).

### **Silence the False Teachers**

Elders must be able to silence, as when wind instruments cease to play, such false teachings (Titus 1:11). To stop them, they may answer them or deny them the pulpit, or both. Whole families could be led astray by their deceptive teachings (compare 2 Timothy 2:18). Sadly, Paul says their only purpose in such teachings was to gain shameful material wealth. No wonder Paul urged the Ephesian elders to take heed to themselves and the flock (Acts 20:28)!

Paul continues his description of the nature of the false teachers by quoting a Cretan poet. J. W. Roberts says Epimenides and later Callimachus wrote, "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons." In fact, a Cretism was a lie. Obviously, such men were not interested in spiritual matters. Their one desire was to receive fleshly pleasure. Paul wanted such who were in the church to receive a sharp reprimand. Otherwise, some of the Cretan Christians might have gone back into that lifestyle. Also, Paul hoped such would turn the false teachers back to sound teaching in accord with the truth (Titus 1:12-13).

Sound teaching would help the false teachers turn aside the myths of the Jewish teachers (Titus 1:14). It would enable them to ignore the commands of those teachers as well. The pure see things, such as shoes, clothing, pots, etc., as pure and useful. However, the defiled man sees only defiled things (Proverbs 23:7). One can tell whether a man is of a pure or impure nature. He has only to look at his works. The false teacher will be found to be contemptible in God's sight, disobedient and unsuited to any good work (Titus 1:15-16; Matthew 7:15-20).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss some of the things which might be included in an elder being above reproach.

2. Describe some of the personal characteristics a bishop should have and others he should avoid.

3. Discuss the bishop's relationship to the truth and uses he might find for it.

4. Describe the false teachers, their teaching and their relationship to Titus.

5. Explain how false teachers can be silenced.

#### Lesson 16

## Instructions for Various Christians

Titus 2:1-15

### **Sound Doctrine for the Aged**

The word "sound" here literally conveys the idea of healthy (Titus 2:1). Unfortunately, many people are not interested in sound teaching (1 Timothy 1:8-11; 2 Timothy 4:3-4). But, Paul urged Titus to teach such words for the good of those who would hear and obey. Specifically, older Christian men were to be taught to be sober minded. They also should live lives worthy of respect. They should be thoughtful. Too, a soundness should be exhibited in love, faith and patience (Titus 2:2).

Older Christian women should live becoming respect. They should not be false accusers or enslaved to wine. Instead, they should be teachers of good things. Among those good things would be Paul's instructions to teach young women. Older women should show the younger how to love husband and children. They would also need to teach them to control their own lives and remain morally pure. A younger woman should be taught to be a worker at home filled with kind deeds. Naturally, they should be submissive to their own husbands (Ephesians 5:22-33). All this was to be taught to prevent someone from being able to truthfully speak against God's way (Titus 2:3-5).

### **Instructions for Young Men and Servants**

As with all the other categories, young men are exhorted to maintain self-control. Titus, like all the other young men, was charged to be a model of good works. His teaching was to be pure, filled with reverence and so sound as to thwart any condemning words from others. In fact, those hostile to the truth would be embarrassed to speak against his life (Titus 2:6-8).

Through Titus, Paul urged Christian slaves to live so as to be acceptable to their masters. They were not to talk back or take something entrusted to their care. Ultimately, all the good they did was meant to please the Master, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:9-10; Colossians 3:22-25). Actually, all the various instructions to Christians were written by Paul to encourage them to glorify God in all their lives.

### **The Grace of God**

The reason all types of Christians are to live exemplary lives is the grace of God. That grace was shown in the coming of Jesus to bring salvation to the earth (Titus 2:11; Luke 2:25-32). When one accepts that grace, he dies to self and is raised to walk a new life. His decisions are then based on what Christ would have him do.

Grace teaches him to change his lifestyle (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 2:20). He learns to say no to the irreverent life devoid of religion. He also sets aside worldly desire (1 John 2:15-17). In place of those, he lives a self-controlled, law abiding life. His disposition will be set in the direction of pleasing God while he lives on earth (Titus 2:12).

#### **Looking for the Lord**

The Christian can change his style of living because he has changed his focus. Instead of focusing on the here and now, he is expectantly awaiting the return of the Savior (Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 16:22; Revelation 22:20). His hope is in Christ and the glory he promised. Like Paul, the Christian faithfully stays the course knowing Christ will reward him with an eternal crown (1 Timothy 1:1; Romans 5:1-5; Colossians 1:27; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

The Lord gave hope by paying the ransom price to buy sinful man out of bondage (Acts 20:28). Such bondage came because of man's lawless deeds (1 Timothy 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:15). He cleanses those who come to him. He consecrates them to perform good works in his service (Titus 2:14; Ephesians 2:8-10; Ezekiel 37:23). Paul urged Titus to speak these things about the Christian life with authority. He was to exhort others to follow such instruction. No one should be allowed to despise the

instruction because it came from God (Titus 2:15).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the importance of sound teaching.
2. Describe how older Christians can live so as to support sound teaching.
3. Discuss the lives young men and servants could live which support sound teaching.
4. List some of the things you learn about grace from Paul's teaching in Titus 2:11-12.

5. Discuss the hope Christians have in Christ and the impact it should have on our lives.

#### Lesson 17

# The Christian's Life in the World

Titus 3:1-15

## **The Christian and Government**

God set up three institutions to provide for man's needs. Those are the home, the church and the government. He established governments to keep civil order. For that reason, Paul urged Christians to be subject to governmental authority (Titus 3:1). Their authority comes from God. They are permitted to use the sword to punish evil doers. Only those involved in wicked acts should have reason to fear them (Romans 13:1-7).

When the Pharisees questioned the Lord about paying taxes

to Caesar, Jesus drew their attention to Caesar's image on the coin. He said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. He even paid the temple tax to avoid giving offense (Matthew 22:15-22; 17:24-27).

Peter learned well the Lord's teaching on submission to those in authority. He insisted our obedience reflects the thinking of our Lord. Of course, he also knew those in authority had no right to ask anyone to disobey his Lord (1 Peter 2:13-17; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29). Civil disobedience becomes necessary when man's law requires one to violate God's law. That may be the reason Paul said "to be ready for every good work." Certainly, we would not, even in obedience to man's law, want to be ready to do any evil work.

Nero was a wicked ruler who did much harm to Christians in his day. Yet, he would be included in the admonition of Titus 3:2. No Christian should allow any evil to come out of his mouth (Ephesians 4:29-32; Colossians 4:5-6). The New King James Version says to be peaceable where the King James puts, "to be no brawlers" and the Revised Standard has, "to avoid quarreling." Christians should also be known for their gentle nature and humble spirit (1 Timothy 3:3; Galatians 6:1). Such attitudes ought to make the Christian stand out and will open doors of opportunity (2 Timothy 2:24).

### **Past Sinful Lives**

Those who were Christians at the time of Paul's writing were once involved in all sorts of sin (Titus 3:3). They were without spiritual understanding (foolish; 1 Timothy

6:9). Being disobedient toward God, they were led astray (2 Corinthians 11:3). They became enslaved to the passions and pleasures of a fleshly existence (Luke 8:14; 2 Timothy 2:22). All of their time was spent in harboring ill will toward others (Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8; 1 Peter 2:1). Like many in the world, they had resented the good that they saw in the lives of others (Matthew 27:18; Galatians 5:19-21; Philippians 1:15-16; 1 Timothy 6:3-5). Others hated them because of their actions and they hated others in return.

### **Saved By God's Mercy**

Yet, God was gently disposed toward all mankind. He initiated efforts to save man by sending the Savior to earth. Though man may do a multitude of good deeds, he cannot earn salvation. Instead, man's salvation comes as a result of God's mercy. The loving Father extends that mercy through the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:4-5). Joseph H. Thayer, in his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, says the word "regeneration" means "new birth." A careful comparison with Romans 6:3-4 clearly shows Paul is talking about baptism since it is in that watery grave that one finds newness of life (see also 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26).

Of course, salvation is not complete without the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Peter told the Pentecost assembly to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Christians are bought with a price and have become the dwelling place

of the Holy Spirit. He is the symbol of our hope in God's love which has been given to us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 5:5). In Titus 3:6, Paul describes Christ as having poured out the Spirit upon those penitents who were baptized.

The Revised Standard Version begins Titus 3:7 with the words "so that." When we obey God in the washing of the new birth and receive the renewing of the Holy Spirit, God justifies us by his grace (Galatians 2:16). Obedience then is a means of access to God's favor, not a work of merit. It is the means by which a sinner reaches the blood of Christ which is found in his death (John 19:31-34; Colossians 2:12; Romans 3:24-26; 5:9). After he is washed in the blood, God adopts him and makes him an heir of the hope of heaven (Galatians 3:26-4:7).

### **A Response to the False Teachers**

The false teachers would have had one believe salvation was through works of the law of Moses. However, Paul has just shown it is by God's mercy which man finds through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Spirit. On the basis of this truth, Paul instructed Titus to teach it with confidence. False teachers are not timid, so the man of God cannot be either. Instead, Titus was to instruct the Cretan Christians to be careful to do good works (Ephesians 5:15-17). Such would be profitable because it is the means by which one maintains contact with the cleansing blood of Christ (Titus 3:8; 1 John 1:7).

Paul urged Titus to stand aloof from, or avoid, useless arguments. Such would likely involve questions man does not have an answer to which do not effect one's eternal

welfare. The Jews, and apparently the Judaizing teachers, spent long hours trying to determine their relationship to Abraham. Further, they would wrangle over things in the law of Moses. Such discussions were like trying to catch the wind in a box (Titus 3:9).

Some would likely persist in dragging men's minds away from good works to those useless matters. When they pressed their opinions to the point of dividing the church, he should be warned and urged to change. Even those involved in such a public sin were to be given the second warning before they were finally rejected (Matthew 18:15-17). How sad to have to treat one who had once been called a brother as a heathen! Yet, he is so corrupted and sinful as to obviously no longer be living the Christian life. Christians must avoid them lest the leaven of their sin spread through the whole church (Titus 3:10-11; 1 Corinthians 5:4-8, 11).

### **Closing Words**

Paul apparently planned to send either Artemas or Tychicus to take Titus' place in Crete (compare 2 Timothy 4:12; Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21-22; Colossians 4:7). Titus was then to join Paul in Nicopolis where he planned to spend the winter. Titus was also instructed to help Zenas and Apollos on their way. Zenas is called a lawyer, but we do not know whether he worked with the Jewish or Roman law. Apollos was a gospel preacher (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 16:12). Hospitality was important to travelers of that day. To bring someone on his way, one would have to provide all he needed to continue his journey (Titus 3:12-13; Romans 15:24; 1 Corinthians 9:9, 14; 16:6, 11).

Perhaps in conjunction with helping Zenas and Apollos on their journey, Paul repeated his instruction for Titus to urge the brethren to maintain good works. They were to be especially mindful of pressing needs. Caring for the needs of others causes one to bear fruit in the Lord's service (Titus 3:14, 8; 2:7, 14; 1 Timothy 2:10; 5:10; 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:21; Matthew 25:31-46). Paul closed by relaying the greetings of all the brethren with him to Titus. In turn, he asked Titus to convey his greetings to those who loved him because of their common faith. His final prayer for the young preacher and brethren, since this "you" is plural, is for God's unmerited favor to be on them (Titus 3:15).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the Christian's relationship to government.  
Is it ever right to disobey the law?

2. Briefly describe the lives of the Cretan Christians prior to their conversion.

3. Discuss the means God chose to extend his mercy to sinful men.

4. List and discuss the ways Paul told Titus to respond to the false teachers.

5. What thoughts would you want to be sure to convey to your brethren if you were closing out an encouraging letter to them?

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This book is dedicated to all the young men who have tried to prepare themselves to preach. It is also dedicated to those mature preachers who patiently tried to teach and encourage

them to faithfully proclaim the truth,  
whether in season or out of season.