

We are now beginning a study through several consecutive letters: 1 and 2 Timothy and the Book of Titus. These are called the “Pastoral Letters” because Paul was addressing them to pastors. So if he was addressing them to pastors, why should we as a church study these letters. There are actually many reasons, but let’s start with the most important one.

- 1 ¹⁶ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV)

If all scripture is inspired by God then this is something we all need to read and study. It is profitable for teaching (doctrine), and for correcting our thoughts, words, and deeds about things, and it instructs us how to live a righteous, godly lifestyle. It will instruct how to get along with others within the church. And, it will give us some great instructions and guidance on living out our faith.

- 2 If you are a Christian, you are part of the Church. As such, you need to understand how the Church is structured and what is the true role of a pastor of a church. I can’t think of a better way to understand that role than to read Paul’s instructions to the young pastor Timothy.

- 3 Pastors are called by God. They are charged with living a spiritually exemplary lifestyle. They are held to a higher standard. They are to serve as a role model for those in their congregation. Paul tells the Philippian church, ⁹ *The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.* (Philippians 4:8 NKJV) We will see the instructions given to a pastor, hence those should be spiritual truths which we all should pursue.

So, in summary, even though these letters are written to pastors, the teachings within them are relevant and beneficial for all believers. It will help each of us to not only understand how the Church operates, but it will give us personal instruction on living out a good and godly life.

Let's begin by looking at some of the callings that God puts on peoples' lives.

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV)

These positions are to "equip the saints for the work of ministry." Some were to be **apostles**. That word in Greek means they were "sent out" directly by God for a purpose. We don't have any apostles like those of the first century today, but we use a word that also means "sent out". And that is the word "missionaries". **Prophets** are those who speak a special message to the body of Christ. This doesn't now refer to someone who tells the future. We have all seen **evangelists** who know how to present the gospel in a simple form. Their message is compelling. It is different. It is a gift given by God. As a boy I went to a Billy Graham crusade and saw hundreds come to Jesus. It was incredible to watch Billy Graham, and to listen to him. Then you have the "pastor teacher". The pastor is the shepherd makes who sure the flock is protected and well-fed.

The more you understand about leadership the better off you'll be as a participant in a local church. Not everyone who thinks they are a leader is in fact a leader. It is important to know what God intended for leaders. Let's look at the words Paul sent to the elders in Ephesus.

²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. (Acts 20:28-30 NKJV)

We have put leadership concepts in the Church that frankly don't belong there. Some churches use a business model, but a church is not a business. They are burdened with layers and layers of committees. I once attended a church that had a "committee on committees". Anyway, let's start with the first eleven verses.

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

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

No Other Doctrine

³ As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴ nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. ⁵ Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from ⁶ sincere faith, ⁶ from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

⁸ But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

Let's look at Dr. Luke's account of the calling of Paul and Barnabas. This will take us right in to verse one of our text today.

13 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. (Acts 13:1-3 NKJV)

In those verses of Acts, we see an ordination by God. It didn't happen by a vote. The Lord called Paul and the brothers fasted and prayed and laid hands on Saul in recognition of whom God had called. It is God that extends the call on a man's life. God called Pastor Larry. God called Pastor Darrell. God called Pastor Michael. God called Wayne House, and God called me. He called each of us to be pastors and we have different projects that He has us working on. When the leaders of FBC Navasota laid hands on me, they were just confirming the calling that God had placed on my life. My attendance at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary was not what qualified me to be a pastor. I was called as a pastor by God, the Spirit empowers me, and the schooling helped to equip me to do what God has called me to do.

V.1 This begins with the name of the sender and Paul is clear that he was sent by God. That of course is the meaning of the Greek word "apostle"; one sent by Christ Jesus Himself. Paul is saying that he was commanded by God to do what he is doing. He's telling Timothy that leadership in the Body of Christ comes by a calling from God. I want to talk about the "calling of God" for a minute. When I came to Union Grove I wasn't interviewed and hired. God called me to this ministry and those who were discussing it all with me knew that God was calling me to it as well. We both knew it. It was a divine work in my life and in their lives. It is God who does the calling.

Verse 2 Timothy was Paul's spiritual apprentice. He wasn't his child in the flesh. He was his child in the faith. Grace, mercy, and peace... in that order.

Verse 3 We learn from this that Timothy was a pastor at the Church in Ephesus. His first charge to Timothy was to guard the gospel. He is telling Timothy to be a watch-dog over sound teaching. Sound doctrine is absolutely essential if you are a teacher. The Greek word says don't teach anything that is "different teaching" (ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖν). So different from what? I would say from the original apostles' teaching. This is the standard by which we distinguish truth from falsehood. The early church had all kinds of "different gospels" that were thrown at it. We as humans are prone to change the truth of the gospel and we're always wanting to add things to what is stated. We are told to "hold fast to what is true".

Verse 4 He gives a warning that the changes to the gospel are just stories and speculation. What I'm talking about here is the parade of "what ifs" that people come up with. They are a waste of time. What is important is the truth of the Word of God and what it says. Avoid speculations. They are a distraction. They can also include genealogies which cause disputes. I think people were looking to genealogies for their worth. All of these things just cause arguments and disputes. They won't give you victory of the flesh or help you in your marriage or with your finances. They will not help you to live for Jesus and remain the salt and the light wherever God puts you. So avoid vain arguments.

Verse 5-7 Paul then tells Timothy that the purpose of this sound doctrine is threefold:

- a. Love from a pure heart – without love in your truth, you're in falsehood

- b. A Good Conscience – right teaching leads to an untroubled mind
- c. A Pure Faith – your doctrine shouldn't be mixed with your own ideas.

You can be RIGHT. YOU CAN BE COMPLETELY RIGHT, and you've still missed the mark. I remember when I was little I went to a very bible focused church. WE were taught sound doctrine and much truth, but there was no real evidence of love among the brethren. Doctrine that is not lived out leads to self-righteousness and self-aggrandizement. As a young boy with much scripture memorized, I was equipped with two doctrinal six-shooters. I would run around and spout scripture and shoot bullets that hurt, but I had not love. That is harmful and destructive. The truth of God's word always includes a deference for others. No matter how hard I look I cannot find where the fruit of the Spirit includes harshness. Dispensing of sound doctrine is careful and not purposefully destructive of the feelings of others. I am not saying that we avoid the truth, but we must be very careful about throwing rocks at others (preaching to others) when we live in glass houses. The harshest words of Jesus were directed at self-righteous people, not the repentant sinner.

Those who had drifted from sound doctrine were teaching legalism. Remember legalism means adding a bunch of rules and regulations to the simple gospel message.

Verses 8-11 There is a lot in these four verses, but let me try to summarize it for you.

He is saying why they shouldn't be teaching the law. Paul gives a laundry list of unholiness. He is saying that the law is a good thing to bring a realization of wrongdoing. But it is a worthless thing in terms of salvation. The law is STILL being misused if it is used to say what comprises right standing with God. It is the mixing up the law with salvation that is the problem.

The law was never given in the Old Testament to save anyone. We saw that truth in Romans 3

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:19-20 NKJV)

We are called to yield to God Who now lives in each of us. *¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13 KJV)* So, as we begin this study of 1 Timothy, let's realize that Paul's instructions to Timothy are meant for all of us. And the purpose of those instructions is that we might become more and more like Jesus.

Let us pray!