

1Tim 23-07-09a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We are here on this ninth day of July 2023, beginning a new study in the pastoral epistles. We will endeavor by God's grace to cover all three of them in the following order, 1st Timothy, Titus, 2nd Timothy.

That is the order in which they were written. The circumstances in 2nd Timothy are quite changed from the situation when the first two were written. And so we will cover it last.

It is the last of Paul's epistles, shortly before his execution in Rome, 2nd Timothy. So we begin 1st Timothy this morning at chapter one, verse one. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our study, and we'll dive in.

Father, what a privilege it is to have before us the wonderful testimony of the Lord Jesus through the apostles, the witness that we have recorded in the gospels, in the epistles, in the revelation. We thank you for the opportunity to have our very own copy in abundance, to have a plethora and a surplus of resources to which we can turn for insight and background and understanding. We know that there is a purpose in this, that we live in the latter days, and that the opening of the truth to its widest extent is available because we face some of the greatest challenges ever posed for believers in all of the history of belief and of faith.

We pray that as we look together at these pages, at the truths that Paul communicates to his son in the faith, Timothy, that your Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts, help us to see their pertinence, their application, their meaning, and the truth that provides motivation and light to our path to live the life that we have been called to in the time that remains to us in this life. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's begin by providing just a little bit of background. The letters that Paul writes to Timothy and to Titus are such that they have come to be known from about the 1700s on. There was a book that was published that named them the Pastoral Epistles, and it was such a fitting title that it has stuck and will probably never be superseded.

The content of these epistles is addressed to pastors, Timothy and Titus, whom Paul trained to be teachers. They were both companions on his travels, and they have been entrusted with the oversight of churches, Timothy in Ephesus, Titus in Crete. As such, you would think, well, this would be a great study for someone who is going to be a pastor because here is the apostolic guidance, the handbook, guidebook for a pastor.

There are several individuals, including Dr. W. A. Criswell, who have written books, a guidebook for pastors, and they contain practical as well as theological guidance for what should and should not take place in a church. Why would we as non-pastoral believers want to study these epistles? It stands to reason that whatever Paul, as an

apostle, is sharing with these pastors with what should and should not take place in church is pertinent to us because our pastor should be sharing the same thing with us, and the goal of that instruction is the same now as it was then. It is for the edification, the guidance, and the information that keeps believers of any gift in any situation on the right path.

So in studying these epistles, we find out through these pastoral instructions what we should and should not be doing in church ourselves. So it is a very worthwhile study. A little bit of background.

Paul writes to Timothy. Timothy's name, Timotheus, means one who honors God, T-I-M-E, with an accent on that E. T-I-M-E means honor, and Theos, of course, is God. So Timotheus is honoring God.

This, of course, is such a meaningful name, and it is no accident that this name was assigned to this individual and becomes a part of these inspired letters. He was named by his family, of course. Timothy had a Greek father and Jewish mother and grandmother.

We know this from 2 Timothy 1, verse 5, which tells us, Paul says, I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. Timothy's mother's name is also significant. Eunice is Nike, E-U means good, and Nike is victory, the good victory, the overcoming in the interest of and for the cause of good.

2 Timothy 1, 5. They, his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, taught Timothy the Old Testament scriptures from his childhood. We know this from 2 Timothy 3, verse 15. From childhood you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise with a view toward salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

From childhood he was trained in the faith by these godly women. Timothy is from Lystra. If you recall our recent Wednesday night study looking at how disciples are made, we reviewed Acts chapter 14, where Paul and Barnabas go to Derbe and Lystra, and they heal a man and are preaching, and they very quickly are perceived to be gods by the Greek population, and they start bringing sacrifices.

Priests are coming out and they're hailing them as Greek gods. Paul and Barnabas shred their clothes and run out into the crowd and say, don't do this. Don't make an issue out of us.

This manifestation of the Holy Spirit and this truth that we are preaching is from the God who created all things. This is a witness to bring you to him, not to glorify us. Don't make an issue out of the messenger.

Understand the message and glorify God. That happened in Lystra and Derbe in the first

visit that Paul makes to that region. It appears to be during that time that young Timothy and perhaps his mother and grandmother who have been steeped in the Old Testament scriptures come to faith in Christ, Acts chapter 14.

This town of Lystra is in the Roman province of Galatia, to whom Paul has earlier written a letter. This is today located in Turkey. Galatia is in modern day Turkey.

It is through the testimony of the Apostle Paul that Timothy comes to faith. We get this information from our chapter, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God, our Savior, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope to Timothy, a true son in the faith. And this suggests to us that not only is Timothy a dedicated follower and companion of Paul as a son would be to a father, but that Paul actually had the privilege of leading him to Christ through his ministry.

We see him calling him his son again in verse 18 of this same chapter. Paul refers to Timothy as his son once again in 1 Corinthians 4.17. In writing to the Corinthians, a study we did not too many years back, in 4.17 of 1 Corinthians, Paul says, for this cause I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which are in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. And once again, you see the emphasis that we have recently been observing at the close of the Gospel of Matthew in the apostolic witness, which is the critical truth, the testimony of the Lord Jesus, which he entrusted to 12 apostles.

This is the truth. This is the witness. This is the power that enables us to live the life to which we have been called.

It is in and through the truth, in and through the Spirit. Either one of those components by itself does not suffice. Knowledge without the Spirit, Paul says, knowledge puffs up.

It is only through the presence of the Spirit, who sheds abroad in our hearts, the love of God, Romans 5.5, that the Word and the Spirit combine to create in us that supernatural love toward one another and toward God that is the goal of our instruction, as we see in this very book. So Paul went to Lystra. You remember he eventually is stoned and left for dead there.

They initially receive him as a God, and before that period of time is over, they are stoning him. And this is the vagary, this is the hazard of the subjectivity that makes an issue out of people, either for good or for ill. It results in deception.

It results in people deceiving themselves, people leading themselves and others in their periphery astray, whether it is those who mistake the message for some merit in the messenger or those who oppose the message and attack the messenger. And whether it is the Greeks who misunderstand and want to deify Paul and Barnabas or those Judaizers who believe that they are blasphemers and are attacking their traditional faith. It's all

subjective.

And the focus for believers should be on the truth. What does the witness that God has entrusted to us through his prophets and through his apostles tell us? Don't start getting distracted by the intermediaries. It is the divinely inspired witness.

Paul is going to tell Timothy the power of this testimony, as we see in 316 of 2nd Timothy. But Timothy's faith originates in Lystra, Acts 14, Paul's first visit. When he comes back to Lystra on his second missionary journey in Acts chapter 16, Paul chooses Timothy to accompany him.

He is evidently very young at this time because when Paul writes these letters to Timothy much later, he still refers to him as a young man. Let no man despise your youth. And there's roughly 15 years between Acts chapter 16 and the writing of this epistle.

So he needs to be relatively young when he first begins to accompany Paul. But in Acts chapter 16 verse 1, Paul came to Derbe and Lystra. Notice this is two chapters.

There's a lot of intervening material between 14 and 16 in Acts. But he comes back to Derbe and behold, a certain disciple was there named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman who was a Jewess and believed, but his father was a Greek, which was well reported of, Timothy is well reported of, by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him, and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek.

And we've seen in the past, there's a fascinating distinction between Timothy and Titus. Paul has Timothy circumcised to avoid creating unnecessary conflict and controversy with the Jews that they are trying to reach with the message of Christ. And it is one of those areas where I will be all things to all men in order that by all means, I may save some.

And to, even though there is no necessity for believers, for men who are Christians to be circumcised, to remove that issue. Paul has Timothy circumcised later on when he takes Titus to Jerusalem, he makes a point of him not being circumcised because there is a different issue. There's a different argument.

There is a different point that needs to be made in that context than in this. But we find out in Acts 16, one through three, the initial introduction of Timothy to Paul. He is recommended because of his faith and his testimony among the believers in that region.

He's well reported of by the brethren. And so Paul takes him on board and he begins to accompany Paul despite his youth. He's probably late teens or early twenties and has this reputation for faithfulness and for interest and for pursuit of his spiritual life.

Timothy is going to be a companion and a co-laborer with Paul for the rest of Paul's life. He is with him in Berea. Remember the Bereans who sought the scriptures to see if these things were so.

Acts 17, 14, the brethren sent Paul to go to the sea. Silas and Timothy remained. They were with him at that time.

And then Paul goes on. He is with him in Athens, Acts 17, 15. They that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens and receiving a commandment to Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

He is with him in Corinth in Acts 18, 5. Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia. Paul pressed in the spirit, testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 2 Corinthians 1, 19.

The son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silas and Timothy was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. It's not yes and no, but yes. Accompanied him to Jerusalem, Acts 20, 4. They're accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, Gaius of Derbe and Timothy and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

When Paul was imprisoned the first time in Rome, Philippians, I'm sorry, 1 Timothy, I'm sorry, Philippians 2, 19-23. Timothy is his companion and Paul mentions him over and over again in his epistles. And there are too numerous to mention.

It's in Romans 16, it's in Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, both letters, even in Philemon. And Paul will send Timothy to be his representative, to communicate his teaching and preaching. So again, in 1 Corinthians 4, 17, I have sent to you, Timothy, my beloved son, faithful in the Lord.

He will bring you into remembrance my ways, which are in Christ as I teach everywhere in every church. Notice the same exhortation that we saw last Wednesday night, Timothy, the teaching and the example that I have entrusted to you, you entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. This is Paul's pattern.

Timothy is faithful. He entrusts his teaching and his example to Timothy. And he even tells the Corinthians, I'm sending Timothy to you.

He will bring you into remembrance of my ways, which are in Christ and what I teach everywhere in every church, the apostolic witness to Christ. It's mentioned again in 1 Corinthians 16, if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear. He works the work of the Lord as I also do.

How do you work the work of the Lord? One of our passages on Wednesday night, when we were looking at the Lord Jesus in John chapter six, he's asked, Jesus has asked, how may we work the works of God? What does Jesus reply? This is the work of God that you

believe in him, whom God sent. Your faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ. The words and works of the Lord Jesus as communicated by the apostles directly into our hearts, our souls, our minds.

When Timothy comes, let him dwell with you without fear. He works the work of the Lord. He believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and he teaches faithfully the words and the works of the Lord Jesus, Paul says, as I also do.

1 Corinthians 16, 10. Philippians chapter two, verse 19. I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly to you that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state.

Timothy is Paul's mouth, his eyes, and his ears. He is Paul's representative. He faithfully represents that apostolic authority, both to communicate and to receive communication.

1 Thessalonians chapter three, verse two. I sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ. I have sent him to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith, to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith.

How is faith established? It is rooted and grounded in the truth. Where does the comfort come from? Who is the comforter? Who is the Pericle? It is the Holy Spirit. When you look at 1 Thessalonians chapter three, verse two, Paul is emphasizing indirectly that it is the truth that Timothy communicates and it is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that Timothy encourages and emphasizes that is the part of his fellow laboring in the gospel.

This is the ministry. This is what builds discipleship in the Thessalonian church. So when we come to this letter, 1 Timothy, Paul has done the same thing.

Paul has left Timothy in Ephesus. This is not the group to whom our book of Ephesians is written. As you know, Ephesians is the Laodicean letter.

It, I'm sure, was read and known in Ephesus, but it wasn't addressed to them. It was an encyclical that went out, but it was primarily written to the Laodiceans. And we know this from Colossians and the carrying of both letters in the same satchel.

But Paul was in Ephesus. He has a deep and abiding relationship with the church at Ephesus. Paul has gone on to Macedonia and he has left Timothy behind to continue the instruction that will build faith and hope and love in that Ephesian church.

So this is our verse three. As I urged you, when I went into Macedonia, remain in Ephesus for what purpose? That you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine. The threat in Ephesus is a threat against the truth.

It is an alternate, a different, a subversive message that does not reflect Paul's apostolic witness. It is different. It is undermining, undercutting, distracting, deceiving people who

need to be focused on the truth that Paul presents.

And Timothy is left there to continue to teach the positive truth in opposition to those who are already attacking it, perverting it, subverting it, and replacing it with vain talk with genealogies and other things that we'll see further on. So Timothy has been left there. So this letter that Paul writes to Timothy while he is in Ephesus opposing these false teachings is an encouragement to hold fast to the truth.

This is the truth that is associated with godliness. We are to have a good standing and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus. You find that in chapter three, verse 14 of this letter.

The instruction of the brethren in first Timothy chapter four, verse six, if you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ. What are these things? That is the content of the letter we are about to undertake to review and understand. And in verse 11 of that chapter, first Timothy four 11, these things command and teach.

Command and teach as a pastor, as a faithful man entrusted with the truth to counter error, to oppose false teaching, to call out those who are deceiving and preaching another gospel for their own purposes. He is to instruct the brethren in the truth, command and teach these things. Verse 13 of that chapter, until I come give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, reading, exhortation, and doctrine.

I cannot emphasize any more strongly than does the apostle Paul that it is not emotion, it is not good intention, it is not warm, fuzzy fellowship that is the foundation for our faith. Nothing wrong with warm, fuzzy fellowship when it is grounded in and centered on the truth. If you compromise the truth, fellowship cannot save you.

Good feelings and warm sentiments will not avoid loss, judgment, being in the darkness which is outside. Feeling good about your faith is no substitute for being instructed, exhorted, commanded in the truth. There is no substitute.

There are things that are causes and there are things that are effects. You cannot simulate or cultivate effects if you do not have the proper cause. The cause for our joy, the cause for our hope, the cause for our celebratory fellowship and the communion of love and unity has to be a result of and grounded in truth.

You can't have some other understanding, some other perspective, some other belief system. You know, there are giddy Buddhists, there are happy Muslims, there are people of all different kinds of faith that have happy fellowship with each other, but that happiness is ephemeral, it is temporary, it will not last beyond the moment because it is not of God, it does not partake of the life of God and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and that has to be properly understood or these other things are a mirage. They have a

form of godliness, the external form, it looks like godliness but it has denied its power.

God's power resides in God's truth and God's spirit, both of which are sourced in the Lord Jesus Christ for us. God's power comes from God, not from a philosophy, not from a construct, not from some adaptation, amalgamation or perversion of God's truth and in the world today and what passes for Christianity today, it is rife. But this is not a new problem, its scope and extent is new, but the problem itself is as old as the days of the apostles.

As we will see in 1 Timothy, Paul is already having to warn Timothy and to instruct him in how to oppose what is truth falsely so called. So that is the purpose of the letter, it is instruction and as Paul will tell Timothy, the goal of our instruction is love. Look at verse 5 of chapter 1, the purpose of the commandment is love.

Everybody wants love. John Lennon couldn't say enough about love in his Beatle days and after. All you need is love.

Dionne Warwick saying what the world needs now is love, sweet love. That's the only thing that there's just too little of. Love, love, love.

And as we just discussed, love is a wonderful thing if it is properly founded and properly sourced and properly enabled and empowered. Human love is fickle. People get married, then they get divorced.

People love you as a friend and then they despise you and hate you as an enemy. People receive you as a God and then they drag you out of town and stone you to death. Paul's experience in Lystra.

It is only to the extent that we are connected to the life of God that we share the love of God. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. But notice, the Holy Spirit alone doesn't produce this love.

It also requires instruction. And so Paul tells Timothy, I urged you in verse three when I left, remain in Ephesus and charge some that they teach no other doctrine. It is the true doctrine, the apostolic doctrine, the Christological doctrine, Jesus' words and works, his exhortations to his disciples who are his witnesses, Paul who is his witness, teach no other doctrine.

Fables, endless genealogies, we'll talk about what those are. What happens? The result of this kind of teaching causes division. It calls out differences.

It makes accusations of error. It spends its time not just identifying error and avoiding it, but wallowing in it and repeating it and creating wars and controversies and divisions and I am of this group and you are of that group. Paul talked about this to the Corinthians if you remember.

I hear there are wars and divisions among you. I am of Paul. I am of Apollos.

I am of Cephas. I am of Christ. It should not be so.

At the same time, what is the balancing truth? You know our affirmation, if you will, our approach is that whenever you find a strongly worded truth in scripture, there will be at least one other truth that bears on that same topic or subject that balances it, limits it, and prevents us from taking it to an extreme. So there should not be wars and divisions. We don't want strife and controversy.

At the same time, we cannot love and unify at the expense of the truth. You can't sacrifice truth and fidelity on the altar of unity and fellowship. One limits the other.

You can't oppose, contradict, and wage war against what you perceive to be error at the expense of Christian love, so that love diminishes and vanishes away and everybody is factionalized, everybody is tribal, everybody is in tiny little factions. On the other hand, you cannot unify and sacrifice truth in so doing. There is that center high ground where we unite to the extent that it is possible, to the extent that it is up to us, Paul says, live peaceably with all men as far as it is up to us.

Now, if someone is going to insist on pursuing and perpetrating and communicating error and they are creating strife and division in so doing, we have to separate. We have to touch not the unclean thing. We have to hate the garment that is spotted by the flesh.

If we are able to pull some out of the fire, that's great. But you can't have love at the expense of truth and you can't have truth at the expense of love. The goal of our instruction, the purpose of our commandment is love, but not just love at any cost.

What kind of love? What does verse 5 say? From a pure heart. How do we know love is coming from a pure heart? Am I born with a pure heart, left to myself? Would I have a pure heart? What does Psalm 51 say about a pure heart? I must confess. What does 1 John 1.7 and 1.9 say about a pure heart, about being cleansed from unrighteousness? I have to have a repentant attitude.

I have to have the humility to acknowledge when I am wrong. If someone points out a fault, I have to be able to acknowledge it and to repent of it and to depart from it. I have to be humble enough to change, to recognize where I have been in error.

Humility is essential to a pure heart. There is no such thing as an arrogant person with a pure heart. But arrogance is our chief foe.

It is the original sin. It is behind all of the five I wills of Satan. To be unwilling to find ways to push away any hint that I might be wrong or I might be at fault.

I might have erred. I might have come short. I might have been self-indulgent.

I might have been blind. I might have been insensitive. I might have been impatient.

I might have been full of myself. I might have been too sure of my correctness to consider any other point of view. Humility is essential to a pure heart.

Look at Psalm 51. David goes to the Lord God in heaven and says, against thee and thee only, I have sinned. Now that sin has worked itself out against others, but the sin is against God.

That's where it begins. Purge me so that I can be clean. Wash me that I may be whiter than snow.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. The power for a clean heart and a right spirit has to come from God. We can't just assume it.

We can't create it for ourselves. We can't adopt it by a happy decision. God has to do it.

And we have to go to God on our knees in humility and cultivate a pure heart. This love that is the goal of instruction is sourced in a pure heart. So I've got to know the source of a pure heart and a good conscience.

The heart is the seat of motivation. The conscience is the location for our thinking. Thinking is based on standards, on values, on knowledge of what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false.

A good conscience can only function if it is operating on good data. It's like a computer. A computer can be working perfectly, but if you feed it bad data, a program can be beautifully written to take input and produce results.

But look at chat GPT. You can ask it questions and produce error because the data it is using is faulty. A good conscience has to be instructed in truth, has to be rooted and grounded in God's truth and sincere faith.

This is unfeigned faith. The word here has to do with non-hypocritical faith. It doesn't hold a mask in front of itself and something else is happening behind the mask.

Hypokrites, behind the mask. Well, we'll see this in detail, but this is the goal of Paul's instruction. It is the theme and the goal of this letter.

The result should not be doctrine wars, should not be debates and fights about fine points of understanding of scripture. The goal is love from pure hearts, good conscience, and unhypocritical faith. Heart, mind, and faith that results from the function of that heart and that mind together.

That's the goal. Well, this is what we'll see when we dive into the text itself when we come back from the break.

