

2Timothy 24-08-21a

Greetings fellow members of Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 21st of August 2024. Every time I announce a new date it just amazes me that we've been on the planet this long.

There were times when we would be getting ready for church and I was a kid and Pastor Pack would be on from Channel 8 in Tulsa talking about how he thought the Lord Jesus was going to be back before 1980 and Orwell's book 1984 was still a prediction and here we are 40 years after that. This is 40 years after 1984. It just astonishes me and some of you that are further along chronologically I'm sure you're even more aghast and astonished than I am.

In any case this is 21 August 2024. We're in our second excavation of 2 Timothy and we're in the first chapter here. We're picking up in verse 3. We'll be looking at this section verses 3 and following.

Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study. We'll dive right in. Father we live in a time of uncertainty.

There are problems abroad and at home in our society, our culture, our nation, the international scene. There are wars and rumors of wars. We have personal challenges.

We have personal opportunities and all of these things challenge us to make the most of what you have given us as your children in terms of wisdom and power to live in the light of that wisdom through the presence of your Holy Spirit. We thank you for him and for his ongoing ministry to us to shed abroad your love in our hearts both as recipients and as those who can reflect it to others. We thank you for the truth of your word, the testimony of the Lord Jesus and the apostles who communicate the message that originates with you and comes through the Lord Jesus through them to us.

We pray that as we look at this portion together tonight that you will bless it to our hearts, help us to understand it, to see its pertinence and application, to be strengthened and encouraged and motivated by it so that we can live the life that you have put us here on earth to live and reflect the glory that shines on us from your presence. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

So, a little bit of review by way of background. The squirrel. Sorry, I was suddenly controlling a distant server and I couldn't figure out how that happened.

Let me begin again. In this letter, we are looking at the third and final of the pastoral epistles that Paul wrote. He wrote one to Timothy, then to Titus, and then this one.

And shortly after this, he is executed in Rome by the Roman government at the behest of agitators who accused him of being a seditionist and an insurrectionist. The letters

that we have here, and we haven't talked a lot about the background, and just very quickly so you have an idea of their place. If you went through the Acts study or if you're familiar with the content of the book of Acts, you know that it begins at Pentecost after the Lord Jesus gives his final instructions to his disciples and ascends in Acts chapter 1. In Acts chapter 2, you have Pentecost.

Then you have John and Peter. You have Peter preaching. There are some healings.

The deacons in the Jerusalem church are commissioned, Stephen among them. You have the growth of that largely Jewish church in those intermediate chapters. Then you get to chapter 6 and chapter 7 with introduction of Stephen and then his arrest, so to speak, by the Jews who are going to stone him to death.

In Acts chapter 7, he gives a long review of Israel's history culminating in the revelation of the Lord Jesus. You have the career of Philip the Evangelist who has daughters who are prophetesses. He encounters the Ethiopian eunuch.

He conducts a revival. You move forward and you begin to encounter Saul on the Damascus Road being confronted by the Lord Jesus, commissioned as the replacement apostle, if you will, for Judas, not Matthias back in the early part of Acts. That was an attempt at a human level.

Anybody who thinks Peter is the first pope and is in charge of the church ought to look at the great mistake he made trying to elect an apostle when they are always called personally by the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus personally calls Paul just as he did the other 11. Then we get into the missionary journeys of Paul.

First missionary journey, second missionary journey, third missionary journey. He is preaching. He is getting stoned and left for dead at Lystra.

He is shipwrecked. He is in front of Felix and Drusilla. You get up into the chapter 20s of Acts.

By the time you reach the end of Acts, Paul is under house arrest in Rome. Having completed three missionary journeys, he is under arrest. That is where Luke's account ends.

After that, Paul is released and travels on a fourth missionary journey, which is unrecorded in Acts. There are allusions and hints of where he went and what he did, both in his letters that are subsequent to the end of Acts and early church records, early church histories, such as Eusebius. During that fourth missionary journey, Paul wanted to go to Spain.

He may actually have gotten that far. He travels. It is during this fourth and final missionary journey that is somewhat hidden from our eyes in terms of a detailed account

that he writes these letters.

And this, in time terms, is A.D. 64-65, somewhere in that region, about 30-plus years after the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Three decades. You think back three decades, this would be looking back to the late 1980s or around 1990, in terms of our perspective on how much time has passed since those events that constitute much of the gospel message.

It has broadened out beyond the Jewish and Jerusalem church to embrace the Gentiles. It is a new creation in Christ. It is a people that are unique and are called and belong to the Lord Jesus.

We, starting at that point, are a gift to be his body, to be his bride, if you want to use that metaphor from Ephesians chapter 4. Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. It doesn't say as Christ loved Israel and gave himself as their Messiah. It says as Christ loved the church.

And even as he fulfilled the Old Testament promises and prophecies at the cross, he is not just looking back, he is also looking forward. And he gave himself for us. It tells us over and over again in the New Testament.

He isn't only interested in accomplishing the Old Testament purpose of redeeming Israel and making it possible for the fulfillment of those Old Testament covenant promises. There is more going on than was revealed in the Old Testament. This is a mystery and we have seen Paul as the apostle of the mystery in our recent studies and what the nature of that mystery is.

The Lord Jesus understood it. It was in his mind on the cross. It was in his mind in the closing days of his ministry on earth when he was rejected.

He came unto his own and his own received him not. There was a remnant. There was a representative group and they are going to provide the bridge and the transition into the church age and Paul is one of them.

So Paul has left Timothy in Ephesus. If you remember at the close of the book of Acts, Paul calls the Ephesian elders to himself and says, I will see your face no more and there are tears and weeping and he is concerned. He says, ravenous wolves are going to come in among the flock and you've got to be careful.

And of course he was right about this. He had the prophetic gift as a part of his apostleship and he knows that there is going to be attacks. So subsequent to the end of Acts, Paul's traveling companion, young man, Timothy is detailed to remain in Ephesus because Paul can't go there.

Paul doesn't ever go back to Ephesus, but he sends Timothy and Timothy is there in first

Timothy. He remains there while Titus is in Crete. Paul has visited Crete, has established a church there, and he leaves Titus to superintend in this wild and woolly West area, which is Crete.

They are much more raucous and totally Hellenistic. They're Greekified, they're thoroughly Roman. There's been no real Jewish presence or Judean ethic.

It's not Judeo-Christian, it's just Judean and not much of that. So he is in a largely secularized, Hellenized, and greatly paganized culture in Crete. And that's the letter that we have just finished.

Now Paul is writing again, and this is within a year or two of first Timothy. All of this, uh, Paul has been re-arrested and is in his final Roman imprisonment. And this one, he will not leave.

He is going to be executed at the close of this incarceration. So first Timothy and Titus were written when he was free and he hoped to come and, and meet Timothy in winter. You recall at the close of that and Titus and so on.

So here we are in second Timothy. Now think back to the outline. If you have an outline in your notes, great.

If you want an outline of first Timothy and Titus, I will give it to you real briefly because I want you to note the pattern in these three letters. The outline of first Timothy is in eight lines. You can have an eight line outline of first Timothy.

I'm just going to give it to you real quickly. The greeting is in chapter one, verses one and two, one colon one and two greeting. The second section is from chapter one, verse three through verse 20, one colon three dash 20.

This is confronting false teaching. Put a star by the second element in the outline. Number two, confronting false teaching.

First Timothy one, three through 20. You've got 18 verses there talking about false teaching. Then what is it like to live according to the gospel? Chapter two, verse one to chapter three, verse 13, just in broad strokes.

What does the gospel teach us in terms of how to live? Two, one to three, 13. That's your third element of the outline. And by the way, if we get to wondering, what should my gospel shaped life look like? That's a good section to read.

And if you recall that section, it begins with, I exhort, first of all, supplications and prayers. That is an excellent place to start ensuring that we are living a life that comports with God's plan and purpose and reflects his glory. Supplications and prayers for everyone and obedience to authorities, how women should adorn themselves and so

on.

You remember this. The fourth element of the outline, the purpose is how should people in the assembly, in the church, in the fellowship, groups of believers, whether they're a family physically, whether they're a family spiritually, when believers are aggregated, how should they behave? So behavior in the church, chapter three, verses 14 through 16, three, 14 through 16. I write to you that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God as the house of God, right? So that's the fourth point.

Now notice point five in the outline of first Timothy, point five, identifying false teaching. In the second point, we had confronting false teaching, confronting it. That was the second point.

Now in the fifth point, identifying false teaching, first Timothy four, one through five, put a star by number five. The sixth element of the outline, chapter four, verses six through 16. This is Timothy's instruction manual for how to be a pastor, how Timothy should live and preach the gospel.

He's got to live it, he's got to preach it. So Timothy living and preaching the gospel, chapter four, verses six through 16. Point seven of the outline, these are various individuals, various types of people in the church, how they should behave.

You have Timothy's instruction for how to be a pastor. Now, how are you going to be, and this is chapter five, verse one through chapter six, verse two. So are you a widow? Are you an elder? Are you a young person? All of that goes all the way through.

Are you a bond servant? Whatever your assignment, wherever you fit in the authority structure, this is how you should live and manifest the good news of Jesus Christ in your life. So that's point seven. Whatever your identity, whatever your station, whatever your place is, your circumstance, chapter five, verse one through chapter six, verse two, the first part of that.

Finally, the eighth point, and this closes out the outline of first Timothy, confronting false teaching. Put stars out beside that one. What do you notice here in this outline? Sandwiching, this is like a double-decker sandwich, isn't it? Point two, point five, and point eight, all of these things have to be done in opposition to identifying and opposing falsehood, that which is not true, that which misrepresents God, the Lord Jesus, and the gospel.

It is woven into our lives. You and I have to be able to spot false teaching. It's not enough to say, well, let's all sit in a circle and do a Bible study, and let's just go around the room.

Well, what do you think this passage means? Ah, very interesting. Well, what about you? How do you? Oh, that strikes you, and tell us a story. Where nobody is willing to say, this is what the Scripture says, and people don't want to find sin in areas where there is

condemnation in Scripture, and Scripture says about itself, the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

If you don't agree with Scripture on what is and is not sin, that is not true teaching. What is it? False teaching. If you do not recognize that there are lifestyles, and there are patterns of behavior that are evil, satanic, bad, and promote darkness, that's false teaching.

If you embrace everyone indiscriminately and uncritically, if you just want to love everyone, and why can't we all just get along, and I really suspect in my heart of hearts that God is a universalist, and sooner or later everyone is going to come into the fold. Some are just going to get there sooner than others. That is false teaching.

We have to know the truth so that we can discern truth from error. Look at the outline of 1 Timothy. This is instructions to a pastor on what to emphasize to his church, and what is mentioned more than anything else.

Don't let them be deceived by deceivers, by lies, by falsehoods. Then we went to Titus, next in order that Paul wrote. I'm going to give you a quick outline of Titus.

This one is quick. There are only six lines. It's got the introduction, as we saw.

The first part is the opening, the greeting, and so on, the salutation in chapter 1, verses 1-4. The second point is the occasion for writing this. There is a need that Paul is meeting by writing this letter, and it is the need for leadership.

We just saw this in recent weeks. That's 1-5-9. Paul says you need to appoint elders.

There needs to be oversight. There needs to be accountability. Notice accountability is top down.

Elders are appointed. They are accountable for things being done decently and in good order. To address the problem, which is the third point, the reason there is a need, a necessity, a requirement for good leadership is point three, false teachers.

Chapter 1, verses 10-16. Put stars out beside point three. The problem is false teachers.

The answer to false teachers is leadership. If there are wolves trying to nip at the heels of the flock, go back and read what Paul said to the Ephesian elders toward the close of Acts. You have got to shepherd the flock of God that the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

I won't be here. You've got to do it. Leaders are enjoined, commanded, exhorted to call out falsehood and warn, rebuke, teach with all authority so that people will not be led astray by falsehood.

That is the third point in Titus, false teachers. Chapter 1, verses 10-16. The fourth section in Titus is Christian living in contrast to false teachers.

Not living according to falsehood, living according to truth. This is chapter 2, verses 1-3, verses 8. Godly living, godliness in contrast to those who are led astray by false teaching, 2-1 to 3-8. Point 5, a restatement of the problem in Crete and by extension for all of us.

False teachers, this is the threat. This is the potential for disaster, catastrophe, failure, falling short. False teachers, chapter 3, verses 9-11.

Put stars out beside number 4 and number 5. Then, point 6 in Titus, a closing encouragement, that is chapter 3, verses 12-15. Do you see a similarity in the outline of 1 Timothy and the outline of Titus? There is a constant, central, abiding emphasis to these pastors. One of their most important responsibilities is to identify, call out, and push out false teaching.

It is the biggest, people say, you know, this and that is an existential threat to democracy or an existential threat to the government. I say, push out. The existential threat to you and to me is people who twist, distort, pervert, corrupt the word of God.

They are wolves in sheep's clothing. That is the warning in those first two. So, as we come to the outline for this letter, 2 Timothy, we have the greeting that we have already seen in chapter 1, verses 1 and 2. The second section, which we are now in, is chapter 1, verse 3 through chapter 2, verse 13.

We are going to call this Perseverance and Endurance. Perseverance and Endurance, 1-3 to 2-13. The third section is going to begin at chapter 2, verse 14.

You will be unsurprised, it is dealing with false teachers. How do you deal with false teachers? This is 2-14 to chapter 3, verse 9. Dealing with false teachers. Point 4 in our outline of this letter.

Contrasting Timothy with false teachers. Timothy is one way, false teachers are another. That is going to be 3-10 to chapter 4, verse 8. This is what these guys are doing, but you, oh man of God, but you, Timothy, here is what you do.

This is what you look like in contrast to false teachers. This is what they do, this is what you do. This is what they love, this is what you love.

Here is the difference. Between a good pastor and a purveyor of untruth. Then there is the conclusion in chapter 4, verse 9 through verse 22.

In broad strokes, that is what this letter covers. Put a star beside line 3, the third section, dealing with false teachers, and the fourth section, the contrast between Timothy as a

faithful steward, as a good pastor, and false teachers. So if you put these three pastorals side by side, there is one theme that emerges more than any other, and it is a threat to you as a believer.

And it is my job as a pastor to point out where there is perversion and distortion, at best, well-meaning falling short. People who are well-intentioned, but they are ignorant of the truth, and they are inadvertently the blind leading the blind. People who don't really understand Scripture should not stand up and share their ignorance with others and lead everybody off the path.

And there are those who are just attracted to the idea that they want to be an influencer. I don't know what goes on. I just know that we are surrounded, we are swamped with people misrepresenting the Word of God, editing it, changing its emphasis, proof texting it, using it for nefarious purposes.

So this is what we are watching for in our study of this final pastoral letter. And as you look at this first chapter, when Paul says, I thank God in verse three, whom I serve with a pure conscience as my forefathers did. Notice what Paul is doing here.

Paul is placing himself in a historical and hereditary context, isn't he? I serve God, but this is not an innovation. I wasn't subject to an epileptic fit on the way to Damascus, and I've invented a religion that is all of my own making. I am serving the God of my forefathers.

I come from a line of people going back. Well, here's a trivia question for you. What tribe is Saul of Tarsus from? That's right.

Good job. Benjamin, just like the original Saul. He's got a namesake going back to the earliest days of the monarchy in Israel.

He is a Benjamite. Remember he says circumcised on the eighth day and the rest of it. So he is reminding Timothy of his roots and the continuity of his faith with those who have gone before.

In every generation of Israel, there has been a faithful remnant. There have been a few. They don't bow the knee to Baal.

They endure the judgments on the nation, and God protects and provides. There's a drought in the land, but there is an unending supply of oil and flour. Whatever it takes, God is not unrighteous to forget those who are faithful, and he provides for them, and he preserves them, and he encourages them, and they learn wonderful things.

Cursing is turned to blessing. So Paul alludes to them, and he says, I serve with a pure conscience as my forefathers. Without ceasing, I remember you in my prayers night and day.

What do we see here? There is this look back. Now Paul has received the torch from the forefathers, the faithful forefathers, and now he is looking to Timothy as someone to whom he is going to pass it. He will be in that line of spiritual forefathers for Timothy.

Timothy, my son. And this is a human fabric, a human connection, a human chain of custody, if you will, for faith, obedience, love for God, and stewardship of the truth of God, right? So Paul looks back and says, I serve as my forefathers. I am your father in the faith.

You are my son, oh Timothy. And he is reminding Timothy that there is a connection that's not just lateral in the moment. Are there believers that I know right now in my periphery, but I have a spiritual heritage, and we become part of a spiritual heritage.

We receive it from those who communicate it to us, and we have the privilege of passing it on to others. So this is a conscious reminder to Timothy, because look what Paul does here in the next verse. I greatly desire to see you.

I remember you. I'm mindful of you. When I call to remembrance, the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother and your mother.

See what Paul is doing here? He places himself in the context of his heredity, and now he is reminding Timothy that Timothy has a heritage. Paul's is through the forefathers. Timothy's is through the two mothers, right? The mother and the grandmother, Lois and Eunice.

And it's in you also. What is this doing? Timothy is in need of encouragement. Timothy's down.

Timothy's discouraged. He's depressed. How do we know this? Look back up.

Greatly desiring to see you in verse four, being mindful of your tears. Timothy isn't waking up in the morning, you know, doing a three mile run and coming in and eating his Wheaties and going out to face the day with a ruddy cheek and a firm brow. He's crying.

Tears. And this has expressed itself in missing Paul. He wishes Paul was there to provide strength that he doesn't feel that he has.

Paul says, I long to come and see you, that I can be filled with joy. And when I'm filled with joy, that joy would extend back to you. Instead of you crying, you would be joyful because you draw it from me as you have drawn strength from me in the past.

But Paul isn't there and can't be there. Remember where he is. He can't say, excuse me, Mr. Jayler, but Timothy's kind of down.

Let me go give him a visit. I'll be right back. And then you can chop my head off.

He's he is unable to visit. And so he is using this context, historical context, family context, spiritual heritage context to remind Timothy that he's not alone. He comes from a line of faithful people, just as Paul envisions himself as coming from the forefathers with this love for God and this worship and service with a pure conscience.

And he is getting Timothy to look outside himself. The key to digging out of depression or discouragement or having just kind of a dark, dismal outlook. We've got to get out of ourselves.

And Paul is doing this so beautifully. And this is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at work. Timothy is looking around.

There are these false teachers. People are disputing and arguing. Timothy's having a hard time maintaining control in the church.

This has been an ongoing problem since the earlier letter, which is just months or maybe a year or at most two years earlier than this one. And Timothy is struggling. There are people who look down on him for his youth, and he's not the healthiest guy in the world.

He's taking arms against a sea of troubles. And Paul says, look, when I suffer my hardships, I remember who I am and why I'm here. I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee of the Pharisees in my early days.

I've had a love for God since my youth. I didn't always understand things rightly, but look at where I have arrived. And you come from a family of believers, your grandmother and your mother.

And as soon as Timothy starts thinking about his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, guess who he's not plowing deep ground about? Himself. He's thinking about Paul. He's thinking about Paul's heritage.

He's thinking about his grandmother and his mother. And this is a way to get back to objectivity. If we can get outside of ourselves, and this requires the grace of God, this isn't just a handy technique that any old unbeliever can avail themselves of.

We have a spirit. This is a spiritual heritage. This spiritual fellowship.

Remember, Paul does this in Hebrews. Remember Hebrews chapter 12, seeing that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. He's not saying, look at the angels that are watching or look at the people that are in your periphery.

He says, remember all these people of faith I just mentioned in chapter 11, by faith, Noah, by faith, Moses, by faith, all of these others, seeing we are surrounded by this cloud of witnesses, they are the past. This is our heritage. And he says, let us go on.

This witness ought to encourage us and motivate us and get us out of ourselves into an

objective view of where we are in God's history and God's purpose. Think about the larger spiritual picture. That's what Paul so elegantly, so beautifully does for Timothy here.

And this is what we can use ourselves is when we're down, when we're hurting, when we come short, when we are constrained, when we are persecuted, when we're afflicted, when there is just a lot of friction, just trying to get through the day, it's one setback after another, one shortfall after another. We make mistakes and fail and that's depressing. By now, shouldn't I have more spiritual oomph? Shouldn't I have a tiger in my tank and not be continuing to sin and fail and kick myself for things I said or failed to do or whatever? We can't stay in that place.

The pastor from days gone by used to say, you've got to bounce back. You have to rebound and you've got to keep moving. You can't wallow.

Don't get stuck in the mire. How do you do that? It's one thing to say, well, rebound and keep moving. It isn't just 1 John 1, 9, name your sin.

Have you ever noticed that if all you do is say, yes, Lord, I failed, you don't suddenly get filled with motivation and encouragement and power and grace and spiritual momentum. What does it take? We have to think our way through. We're going to see the word here, sound mind coming up at the end of verse seven, power and love and a sound mind.

The ability to get up and move forward doesn't come from confessing our sins. That's a wonderful necessary first step, but the keep moving part is what counts. Otherwise you're just going to bounce in place and you're never going to bounce as high.

Drop a basketball and watch it. It doesn't keep returning to the same height, does it? You need more power. You need more grace.

The way to do that is to become objective instead of subjective. Look outside to the past example of believers, both biblical and historical and in our own experience, who didn't let failure, setbacks, opposition, affliction, or discouragement bog them down. The Holy Spirit will use that to put divine wind in our sails.

This is not just a meditation technique that any old body can use. This only happens with the and power of the Holy Spirit. But these are inspired ideas, inspired examples.

They carry divine power with them. And when we go to the Lord prayerfully, confess our discouragement, confess our failure, confess our inability to move. And we appeal and we say, Lord, I want to remember the godly heritage in the past.

Many of us have it in our personal lives. If you come from a family that was all a bunch of godless pagans and you're kind of the first, go to the scriptural example. Look at David.

Read the Psalms of David. If you want to talk about a guy that often got discouraged, there's a formal category of Psalms called the laments. But David moves himself through lament to hope and to the claiming of promise.

I may walk through the valley of shadow of death, but one of these days I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. There's movement in these. And David gets outside himself.

And that's what Paul is encouraging Timothy almost subconsciously to do here. He just plants the seeds. Look at me, Timothy.

You know the hardships I've undergone. But I think of myself in the context of my forefathers and the privilege I have of serving God with a pure conscience. Think about your grandmother and your mother and how proud they are of you, how much they pray for you, their hopes for you, their excitement when it was recognized that you have a gift from God that was manifest in the laying on of hands.

And charge your batteries, get up off your knees, get back on your feet, take another few steps forward. It's okay to cry a few tears, but you've got to pick up and move on. And to do that, you've got to get outside yourself.

This is a wonderful example for all of us. Well, we'll pick up at this point in verse six when we come back from the break.