

Text

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

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

Main Point

Refuting False Teaching with Authority and Faithfulness

Introduction (300)

Hook

A lot of us have faced tricky situations at work. Be it, being at odds with a client, customer or member of the public.

Or being questioned about a decision you made about a project or operation.

There you are, your decisions and actions being questioned and criticized, and although you are fairly confident you did the right thing, doubt starts creeping in, and you start to think how you can compromise to appease the person and make the conflict go away.

But imagine the relief, and boost in confidence you would feel if your boss steps in and backs your decision. But not only back you, but reaffirm your choice and reaffirm your actions. Even encourages you

to keep doing just that, regardless of what the client or member of the public may say.

The book of first Timothy, This letter from Paul to Timothy is a letter form a senior to a delegate, backing him in his work and encouraging to keep doing what he is doing regardless of opposition and criticism.

This Letter is Paul backing Timothy in a serious way in the face of serious opposition.

Outline

Today we are going to look at a bit of an introduction of first Timothy, by focusing on the first two verses.

By way of an outline we will first see:

1. Book Introduction
2. Paul's Authority (v1)
3. Timothy's Faithfulness (v2)

Part 1 – Book Introduction

Exposition

History

Before we jump into the first two verses of this letter, let us take a bit of time thinking about the background and context surrounding this book.

As mentioned before, the apostle Paul is the author, and the recipient is a man by the name of Timothy who was doing ministry work in Ephesus.

The letter was written some time after Paul's first imprisonment, after 60 AD and some time before 66 AD when Paul was martyred. So the letter is written sometime in the early to mid 60's.

So, this letter is written really at the closing of the apostolic era. This letter represents instructions to the church as the age of the Apostles comes to an end and the age of the Church as we know it begins.

Occasion

The occasion that prompted Paul to write this letter was that certain people were spreading false teaching in the Church of Ephesus.

People were teaching heresy, and Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes this letter to refute these false teachings and to encourage Timothy as he confronts these false teachers.

Purpose

We can see his purpose statement in 1 Tim 1:3-4 where Paul writes, addressing Timothy:

1 Tim 1:3-4

³As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship[a] from God that is by faith.

We see the false teaching addressed in chapters 1, 4, 5 and 6, but Paul also takes time to instruct Timothy other things such as how to organize church. How to structure the local church.

Paul knew it was not enough to refute these specific false teachings. But there is also a need to structure the church to be ready for future assaults against the truth.

Hence, we also see instructions on how to choose church leaders (Elders and Deacons), and various church life interactions in chapters 2 and 3.

Theme Overview - Church Leaders

Within the main purpose of refuting false teaching, we can see three major theological themes in this letter. The themes themselves give us an indication of the seriousness of false teaching.

One of the major themes is the **Qualification for Church leaders**. And this links directly to refuting false teachers. Elders are responsible for doctrinal oversight. To have strong leadership is to be prepared for false teaching. And Deacons also play a vital role in this as they support the Elders in their work. We see the qualifications of elders and deacons stated in 1 Tim 3. After explaining the qualifications for these two offices, Paul says in v15:

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

Choosing qualified Elders and Deacons directly influences the church's ability to be a pillar and buttress of the truth.

Theme Overview - Salvation

Choosing qualified church leaders is the first theme. **Salvation** is a second major theme. And specifically, Paul uses the phrase of “*God our saviour*”. In I Tim 1:1 we read:

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

And again in chapter 2 verses 3-4

³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God the Father as saviour is rooted in the Old Testament, and this phrase reinforces the idea that He is the source of Salvation, a salvation purchased by Jesus Christ and applied to believers by the Holy Spirit.

Theme Overview – Preservation of Believers

The third major theme is the **Preservation of Believers**. Preservation from Satan and demonic forces. Satan was using these false teachers and teachings to ensnare and swerve people away from the faith. Paul recognised that there was a spiritual war on. There was nothing passive or accidental about these false teachings. They were a deliberate attack to destroy God's people. In 1 Tim 4:16 we can feel the urgency when Paul writes:

¹⁶Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching... Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

To not “keep watch” and to not “persist” will mean not saving yourself nor your hearers...

And in 1 Tim 6:20-21 we get a similar idea

²⁰O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” ²¹for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

Application

False teaching is dangerous

So, even from this bird's eye view of the letter, we get the notion that false teaching is dangerous. And that correct doctrine is vitally important.

Correct doctrine is not merely about being right. Doctrine impacts how we act and live every single day.

What you hold to be true is one of the most important things about who you are.

- What you hold to be true impacts how you act and react in all situations.
- What you hold to be true impacts how you build relationships and interact with others.
- What you hold to be true impacts how you face suffering, and trials.
- What you hold to be true impacts how you worship God.
- What you hold to be true impacts your eternal destination.

Correct teaching matters! And if you believe false teaching, your life will be impacted.

- Is there sin in your life that you feel like you just can't overcome?
- Do you struggle to build lasting relationships?
- Do you struggle to put into practice the One-another's of Scripture?
- Do you struggle to have joy in the midst of suffering and trials?
- Does your worship of God feel shallow and superficial?

- Do you know without a doubt that if you were to die today you would be accepted into Heaven?

Your convictions about your nature, about your purpose, about the nature of God, and His purposes in your life affect everything you do.

- It affects your relationship with sin.
- It affects your relationship with others.
- It affects your relationship with the church.
- It affects your relationship with the God of the universe.

What you hold to be true matters. Not just what you affirm theologically, a body of truths you are willing to affirm.

But on street level. Deep down in your heart. Those things you are convinced of. Those beliefs which drive your every thought action and reaction.

Believing lies?

Our hearts are quick to believe lies. In fact, our hearts want to believe lies. And what more the world around us is constantly selling us these lies. The spiritual battles rage on.

For example, one lie you are sold again and again that “your happiness is the most important thing”. It gets repackaged in different ways but that is a major message we hear around us. And what more your sinful hearts want’s to believe that. Your sinful hearts confirm that lie.

If you hold that message to be true, you will make decisions, act and live in a certain way.

But this is false. We hear it around us, we want it to be true, but it is deadly false.

And so Praise God for books like 1 Timothy to remind us again and again to stop believing the lies of the world.

To stop believing lies like “your happiness is the most important thing” and to start believing the truth that “your holiness is the most important thing”.

If you believe that, instead, your life will be radically different. If your main goal is holiness your life will be radically different than if your main goal is happiness.

And that is just one example of false teaching impacting our lives.

Your belief, your convictions, what you hold to be true impacts everything you do! Everything.

And so we need the instructions of Timothy today, as much as the church in Ephesus needed it then. To confront our false beliefs. To form our belief, to form our convictions, to form those truths that drive our actions, on God’s word, and that alone.

Link

And so, with those introductory thoughts, let us turn our attention to verse 1 of Chapter 1.

Part 2 – Paul’s Authority

Exposition

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

Paul

Paul, formerly known as Saul. Paul who had gone from being a zealous persecutor of Christians to dedicating

his life for the spread of the Gospel is the self-attesting author of this letter.

After his dramatic conversion, he received special revelation from our Lord and is cautiously welcomed by the church, thanks to the courageous efforts of Barnabas.

Paul is eventually sent by the church to spread the gospel and plant churches. During his missionary work, Paul had strengthened the church in Ephesus, spending approximately 3 years there. He loved this church and knew them well.

We read of his last exhortation to the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20. We are told that many tears were shed, but Paul also took this opportunity to warn them that false teachers, or wolves, would come among them, wolves who would not spare the flock.

Acts 20:28-30

An Apostle

It seems that Paul's predictions were true. Fierce wolves have come among the Ephesian church and they are not sparing the flock. They were fleecing the flock.

And so, as said before, Paul sends Timothy to confront these false teachers. And this letter backs Timothy in his task.

This letter is meant to bring weight and authority to the work Timothy is doing. Hence the opening words:

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

Paul is highlighting his office of Apostle to bring a certain weight of authority to this letter. To bring a weight of authority to the work Timothy is doing.

Timothy does not doubt the apostolic authority of Paul, but it is stated for the sake of the false teachers and for those being deceived.

Paul is an apostle of Christ Jesus. The Office of apostle has the highest authority associated with it. Only 13 men held this office of Apostle. These men held special authority to form the foundation of the church. To proclaim the truths that Jesus taught them. To proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

By command of God

Not only does Paul stress his apostolic office, in this greeting, but he also states that it is “*by command of God*”

This achieves two things.

First it redoubles the weight of this authority. He is acting under royal command. The king of the universe has commissioned him. He is speaking on behalf of the King. To disobey him is to disobey the King. He has the signet ring of the king as it were.

But the second thing that the words “*by command of God*” invoke is that Paul is not a renegade. He himself is a man under authority. He is not building his own kingdom, but is submitting to the King of kings. He is a man with authority, also under authority.

Link authority with Saving work

What more the authority is not limitless. It is not an authority with infinite scope. He has been given this

authority for a specific purpose. And even in this greeting we can see that:

*¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus **by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,***

Paul's apostolic authority is linked with God's saving work. God's redeeming work.

God is the author of our salvation and Christ Jesus is our hope in this life and the next. And God uses his servants, mere men, men like Paul and Timothy, to make that know and to preserve the truth so others too can be saved and have hope.

Paul has been commanded by God, to be a messenger for God, to share the saving work of God.

That is the purpose and scope of Paul's Apostolic authority, and so we do well to listen to him carefully, even as the church in Ephesus was called to.

Application

What influences You?

As we are thinking about authority, what do you give authority to in your life?

- What do you lend your ear to and allow to influence you?
- Who or what do you allow to have authority in your life?

On street level, not just academically.

- What influences what you believe?
- What do you listen to?
- Does it have God given authority?

- Do you simply listen to it because you like what it says?

Only if it has God as the source does it have true authority.

Take the time to think about what influences you, what shapes your beliefs. What is forming your convictions?

How are you using the God-given authority you hold?

Also, as we are thinking about authority, how are you using the God given authority that you hold? Each of us have been given some level of authority by God. How are you using it?

Be it simply the authority over your own life?

Or Parents over children?

Or Bosses over employees?

Or Husband over wives?

Or Elders over the church?

Or Civic positions over the people?

Do you also recognise that whatever position of authority God has placed you in, you are under authority yourself? That you are not independent or self-reliant?

As you exercise your authority, do you realise that it as a delegated authority?

Your authority has scope and purpose. As you exercise your authority, is it within the scope and purpose that God has asked of you?

Link

Our society hates the idea of authority. Our sinful nature also hates the idea of authority. Who has the right to tell me what to do? But authority is a biblical concept and God establishes people in Authority. Authority is God's idea and is good in its proper place and with its proper use.

So we have seen Paul's authority, let us now turn out attention to Timothy's faithfulness.

Part 3 – Timothy's Faithfulness - v2

Exposition

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

Timothy - Conversion

Here we see the letter explicitly addressed to Timothy. Timothy was a young man who grew up in the town of Lystra. Lystra, you will remember is one of the towns Paul travelled to on his first missionary journey. We can read of Paul's time in Lystra in Acts 14.

It was there that after healing a man crippled from birth, the people of the town were so amazed that they wanted to worship them as gods and sacrifice animals to them. Paul and Barnabas try hard to stop this blasphemy and after persuading the crowds continue to teach them about the one true God.

But then some Jews from Antioch and Iconium turned the crowds against Paul and Barnabas to such a degree that they are seek to put Paul to death. They

drag him out of the city and stone him. Whether Paul died and was brought back to life or miraculously survived, we do not know, but Paul survives by God's miraculous intervention.

He even comes back to Lystra to appoint Elders in the churches and to encourage the saints in the face of tribulations.

We expect that it is this series of events that led to Timothy's conversion.

In Acts 16, we read of Paul's return to Lystra on his second missionary journey, and that is when Timothy joins Paul on his travels.

Acts 16: 1-4

True child in the faith

By the time of writing this letter, Timothy and Paul had done many things together. They were close friends and co-workers, with a strong mentor-mentee relationship.

But it is not just a close friendship. Timothy was an example of a faithful believer. We get that idea from 1 Cor 4:17:

1 Cor 4:17

¹⁶ I urge you, then, be imitators of me. ¹⁷ That is why I sent^[c] you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ,^[d] as I teach them everywhere in every church.

The Corinthians were to imitate Paul as He imitates Christ, just like Timothy is doing.

Timothy is an example Paul is pleased to point to.

And in verse 2 of this letter this same idea is present.

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

“My true child in the faith”.

In context of this letter, of refuting false teachers, this sets Timothy as an example against the false teachers. Paul is saying that Timothy was a worthy man to look to as an example of a Christian, not these false teachers.

This is reemphasising the backing Timothy is receiving from Paul.

We can think of five characteristics which this statement implies.

Saving faith

Firstly, he had genuine saving faith. Timothy is called “Man of God” in 6:11, and in II Tim 1:5 Paul speaks of Timothy’s sincere faith.

Timothy had saving faith in the work of our Lord Jesus on the Cross. In direct contrast to the false teachers.

Continuing Obedience

Second, Timothy had continuing obedience. His faith had fruit. A life of obedience is the mark of a believer, and this was true of Timothy.

Not so for some of those in the Ephesian Church:

In chapter 6:9-10 Paul writes:

⁹ *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and*

destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

A true child of the faith continues in obedience and puts aside senseless and harmful desires.

Humble service

Thirdly, a true child of the faith shows humble service.

Timothy was charged to go and confront false teachers. To throw himself in the midst of conflict. Timothy was willing to serve in this difficult task, which is in sharp contrast to these false teachers:

6:3-4

³ If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound^[b] words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴ he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,

These teachers, just want to do what they want to do. They are puffed up and do not care that their flippant teaching is destroying the lives of believers.

A true child of Faith is there to serve, not be served.

Adheres to sound Doctrine

Fourthly, a true child of faith adheres to sound doctrine. Timothy was charged to confront false teachers, and so it is fundamental that he adheres to sound doctrine

1 Tim 4:6

⁶ If you put these things [correct teaching] before the brothers,^[a] you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

Courageous Conviction

And Fifthly and lastly, A true child of Faith is courageous with convictions

Timothy was to be a fighter, not passive or trying to get everyone to like him. The great motivation was to please God, not to please people

1 Tim 1:18-19

*¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may **wage the good warfare**, ¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith,*

In contrast to the false teachers, who easily compromised. Easily took the easy road. Easily took the pleasant road

They compromise by listening to their passions and desires. For example, for the love of money: 6:10

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Recap

So Timothy had a special place in Paul's heart, not just because they were good friends, but also because Timothy exemplified a true follower of our Lord Jesus.

Timothy was a true child in the Faith. He had genuine saving faith. He continued in obedience. He served humbly. He adhered to sound doctrine and he carried his convictions with courage.

All this in contrast to the false teachers who were serving themselves and exploiting the church.

Application

Are you in the Faith?

Now we have just spent a bit of time thinking about this Timothy as a good example of a follower of Jesus.

But before we bring this study to a close, let me ask you: Are you a follower of Jesus? Do you trust in Jesus as your saviour and follow him as your Lord?

All of us enter life as enemies of God. We are rebels against God, not unlike the false teachers in Timothy's day: living to please ourselves and using any means to do that. Living self-sufficient, self-dependent, self-serving, and self-pleasing lives. Instead of living to please and worship him, we live to please and functionally worship ourselves.

As with any rebel, our actions deserve punishment from God. Even what we would consider "good" is but filthy rags to the holy and just God. We deserve eternal punishment.

But God chose to save us. God chose to rescue us for our self-destructive lives. Jesus Christ came to die to pay for the penalty we owed God. He died that we may live.

Paul and Timothy heard and proclaimed this truth and it changed their life and it changed their eternal destination.

Have you heard and believed this truth? Are you in the Faith?

Do you believe that Jesus died to pay for your sins? Do you see your sinful actions and thoughts for what they are? As acts of treason against the King of kings? And do you wish to turn for these sinful actions? Do not turn away the gift of salvation while you have the ability to accept it, no one knows when it will be too late.

Would your life be used to exemplify “A true child in the Faith”?

Being in the Faith, being saved for eternity in hell, is a radical change that brings peace and joy in.

But God does not merely save us. He saves us with a purpose to mature us into the likeness of Jesus. To mature us into “true children in the faith”

To those of you who are in the faith, when you look at your life, would you be used, as Timothy was, to be an example of “a true child in the faith”?

Is your life characterized by continued obedience and humble service?

Is your life characterized by sound doctrine and courageous conviction?

Too often the fear of man is stronger in our lives than the fear of God.

Too often we love ourselves much more than we love our saviour.

And so we must repent, we must plead for his forgiveness, and

we must pray for the strength, courage and wisdom.

We must pray that in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit we would become living examples of a “true children in the faith”.

Conclusion

As we bring this study to a close, let us not forget the very real danger of false teaching. The danger of having our convictions shaped by things that are false.

What you hold to be true is one of the most important things about who you are. Specifically truth about yourself and truth about God.

There are many lies out there. There are many sources of teaching which seek to shape what we hold to be true. And what more our sinful hearts love these falsehoods.

And so it is good to question what has shaped our existing convictions. To question what has influenced you.

And it is also good to take careful note of what you allow to influence your convictions today. Does it hold authority? Does it hold God given authority?

Are your convictions leading you to become more and more an example of a “true child in the faith”?

Are you growing in obedience?

Are you striving for humble service?

Are you adhering to sound doctrine?

Are you courageous in your convictions?

As we consider these opening words for the apostle Paul to the faithful man Timothy, we remember the great work God did in the life of Timothy and in the Church of Ephesus, and we can be encouraged that it is the same Great God who is working in our lives in His Church today.

Let us pray,

Song: IN TENDERNESS HE SOUGHT ME