

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 23RD, 2019 // FUNDAMENTALS

- 1 & 2 Timothy are a part of the “Pastoral Epistles”- which were letters sent from the Apostle Paul to his protégés and spiritual sons Timothy & Titus.
- The letters contain instruction and encouragement in the fundamentals of Christian discipleship, as well as direction for things like church government and leadership.

WHO WAS TIMOTHY? (ACTS 16:1-5)

Acts 16 tells us that Timothy was from the city of Lystra in Asia Minor.

- Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother who had become a believer.
- Timothy had most likely converted to Christianity during Paul's 1st missionary journey and visit to Lystra, and he had a good reputation in the Christian community (vs. 2).

Paul wanted Timothy to join he and Silas in their 2nd missionary journey, so the text tells us that Timothy was circumcised, “because of the Jews...”

- But why would Paul want to force circumcision on anyone? Didn't he spend a lot of time preaching that circumcision wasn't necessary for salvation?
- Timothy was already a believer- this wasn't salvific.

Paul wanted to remove any stigma, scandal, or stumbling block from the young man's status in the Jewish community.

- Since Timothy was ½ Jewish and uncircumcised, Paul was wise enough to foresee that Jews in every city he would visit might raise this issue.
- So in order to gain trust and establish credibility with the Jews, Timothy had to affirm his Jewish heritage and go through this ritual.

Timothy became Paul's disciple, spiritual son, and later his co-worker in preaching.

- In the year 52, Paul & Silas took Timothy along with them on their journey to Macedonia.
- Timothy traveled with Paul for many years on missionary journeys preaching the gospel and establishing churches, and in A.D. 64, Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to lead.

Timothy's name appears as the co-author on 2 Corinthians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

- He may have been subject to ill health or “frequent ailments”, as Paul encouraged him to “use a little wine for your stomach's sake” (1 Tim. 5:23).
- Church history tells us that in the year 97 AD, an 80-year-old Timothy tried to preach to a procession in honor of the goddess Diana and was beaten to death.

THE AIM OF OUR CHARGE (1 TIM. 1:1-5)

This letter is addressed to Timothy (vs. 2), but like other epistles it was intended to be read before the entire assembly at Ephesus.

- By addressing Timothy as his “true son”, Paul was showing his purpose in the letter to encourage and guide Timothy.
- Paul's introduction to this letter is loaded with authority- his apostleship was by “command of God our savior and of Christ Jesus our hope”.

Who was Paul?

- Paul identifies himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (vs. 1) - someone who had been an eyewitness of Christ & had been given authority to establish the church & write scripture.
- Paul also states that he is Timothy's spiritual father (vs. 2)- someone who knew and loved him well and was able to provide guidance.

Vs. 3 tells us why Timothy is in Ephesus- he's there to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine”.

- “Different” in this sense means teaching that was different from the early church's standard of truth- the Old Testament, the words of Christ, and the teaching of the apostles.
- The faithful teaching of God's Word is vitally important wherever false teaching abounds.

The false teaching in Ephesus to was “myths and endless genealogies” (vs. 4).

- The “myths” most likely were extra-biblical legends used to promote immorality.
- “Endless genealogies” refers to histories and prophetic speculations rising out of guesswork and a desire to be different.
- People were twisting and misinterpreting scripture and Jewish tradition to make it say whatever they wanted.

Paul gets right to the point- “the aim of our charge is love” (vs. 5) – Paul & Timothy's reason for speaking against this false teaching and speaking the truth of God is love.

- This love is for God and for people, and it stems from a “pure heart”, a “good conscience”, and a “sincere faith”- there are no hidden motives.
- The purpose behind Paul's Godly instructions on the fundamentals of faith is simply love.

FUNDAMENTALS

So much of the instruction of 1 Timothy is on the practical application of the fundamentals of Christian discipleship.

- It's dangerous for us to miss the point entirely of studying scripture- it's not to “devote ourselves to myths and endless genealogies...” (vs. 4)
- The “aim of our charge is love” (vs. 5)- our love for God and others is shown through lives devoted to the things that please God.

1. Church (1 Tim. 4:13)

- The word devote means to “give all or a large part of one's time or resources to a person, activity, or cause”.
- We can say that we're a “Christian nation”, but the reality is, most Americans are far more devoted to their jobs, families, hobbies, kids' activities, or simply their own comfort/ convenience than God.
- In a 2018 survey, only 22% of Americans claimed to attend church every week.
- One of things we're commanded to do is to “devote ourselves” to gathering together as believers to read Scripture, to encourage each other, to pray, to sing, and to be taught.
- Regular church attendance is vital to a Christian's spiritual growth.
- Those who don't make weekly church attendance a priority often find themselves in times of loneliness, discouragement, and struggle.

2. Prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-3)

- Prayer must be a priority in the life of the Christian because communication with God keeps us in sync with His heart and His spirit.
- Prayer is interceding for others and asking God to move in our community!
- If you set aside 10 minutes each day to pray by-1. Praising, 2. Repenting, 3. Others, 4. Yourself, watch what God does over time!
- So often we don't even know what we're missing (Jeremiah 33:2-3)

3. Reading & Studying Scripture (1 Tim. 4:6b)

- The Bible is the mind of God on paper- not only is it the inspired Word of God, it's intended to shape how we live by “teaching, rebuking, and training us” (2 Tim. 3:16).
- It might be intimidating, but start small and keep chewing! If you're a new Christian, start in Matt., skip to Acts, and then read through the N.T.- read just 1-2 chapters a day each day.
- Keep reading even when you might feel nothing!

4. Holiness & Obedience (1 Tim. 6:11b)

- We can never substitute Bible knowledge, experiences with the Holy Spirit, and serving other people for obedience and holiness.
- In every Christian's life, there must be a commitment to obey God's word, to put sin to death, and to pursue a righteous life that looks different from the world.
- This also means growing in Godly character- none of us should look the same as a year ago.

5. Giving (1 Tim. 6:17-19)

- One cannot honestly read the entire Bible and come away with the conclusion that Christians aren't supposed to be regular, generous, financial givers and supporters of God's work.
- We're told to not “set our hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God”, and we do this through generosity.
- Giving reminds us that money is a tool we're given to steward, not a god that saves.
- A good practice for Christians is regularly tithing to their local church.
- Tithing (giving God 10% of our monthly income) is actually a form of Sabbath- God's people ceased from work on the Sabbath & trusted that God would provide the increase, because God was at work when they weren't.
- Living on 90% of your income is an act of faith in God that He'll make the difference.

WHAT AM I DEVOTED TO?

God is not unreasonable with His expectations of us- He knows we have to sleep, work, spend time with family/friends, and take time to rest.

- But what God asks for us is for us to devote ourselves to Him and to put Him first, and when do we actually can live better quality lives!
- It really all boils down to trusting God to lead us and provide what we need.