

## Introduction to 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1:1-7

“This letter is from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, appointed by the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus, who gives us hope.<sup>2</sup> I am writing to Timothy, my true son in the faith. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.<sup>3</sup> When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. <sup>4</sup> Don’t let them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations, which don’t help people live a life of faith in God.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. <sup>6</sup> But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. <sup>7</sup> They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don’t know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.”

**1st Timothy was the eleventh Epistle written by Paul.** It was written between Paul’s two Roman imprisonments, as he traveled on his fourth Missionary Journey. After stopping in Ephesus, Paul traveled on to Philippi; but requested Timothy to stay in Ephesus for further instruction to the Church. **Those instructions were centered around these three things: pure doctrine, pure worship, and faithful ministry.** **Pure doctrine** is salvation through Jesus Christ. **Pure worship** is the worship of no other except God's only begotten Son. **Faithful ministry** is the preaching of nothing but the grace of God.

Therefore, look with me as we begin our study of this very important book of the Bible.

Paul begins this way in verses 12, "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: grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”

**There was never a man who magnified his office, as did Paul.** He did not magnify it in pride; but he magnified it in the wonder that God had chosen him for the task of *missionary* and *evangelist*. Listen to his words in verses 12-13 of this chapter, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." **Paul never forgot that before the Lord Jesus came into his life, he was a man that hated the followers of Jesus Christ and a sinner lost and headed for hell.** Notice his words in verse 15, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

But now this man of God begins his letter to this young preacher, Timothy, this way, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ... " The word "apostle" in the Greek is the word "apostolos" which means, "to send out." **Therefore, an apostle was a person that was an envoy or an ambassador.** An ambassador is one who represents his country and his king, and for this reason Paul could write to the church at Ephesus, "For which I am an ambassador in bonds" and to the church at Corinth he wrote, "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ..." **Not only was that the case with Paul, but also in reality, that is the office of every Christian.** The first duty of every Christian is to be a representative of our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, to the rest of the world.

And then he says that he was "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God..." Paul's was absolutely convinced that his authority to preach came from the very hand of God!

**Jeremiah had this same kind of authority.** He was a shrinking violet, a retiring sort of person, and a man with a broken heart. Yet when he spoke he gave some of the strongest statements that ever came from God. **Why could he do that?** Because he saw himself as a soldier under orders from holy God of glory.

**Listen, any man who is going to speak for God today needs to do it with *authority* or he ought to keep quiet.** A man who gets up in the pulpit and preaches with *no anointing* and with *no authority* from the Word of God has nothing to say. Paul was an apostle who spoke with the authority of God.

Paul then uses a term that will do us well to look at; he speaks of "God, our Savior..." **But is God *really* our Savior?** Absolutely! In Psalm 24:5 the Psalmist spoke of how the good man "will receive righteousness from the God of his salvation." In Luke 1:46-47 Mary says, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."

Ladies and gentlemen, John 3:16 tells us that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." Now watch this, God provided the sacrifice, but it was the Lord Jesus who was the One who came to this earth and executed it!

**At the back of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, is the love of God!** And I say to you tonight, that if the Father had so willed to call His Son down from the Cross, you and I would burn in hell forever!

**Therefore, Paul's credentials were unquestionable.** God did not only commission him, he was sent out as a preacher of the gospel of Christ, and a minister of the kingdom of heaven.

Paul continues in verse 2, "To Timothy, a true son in the faith..." **Paul had led Timothy to the Lord.** He had seen him surrender to the ministry. They were very dear and close friends. So close, in fact, that Paul saw Timothy as his "son in the faith."

**We read of Timothy in the books of Acts, Ephesians, and Philippians.** His father was a Greek. His grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, became Christians before him. **He lived in Lystra where Paul was stoned and left for dead.** Acts 14:19-20 give us these details, "Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having

persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.” Paul reflected on this event in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago - whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows - such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows - how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” **Paul’s experience is not often spoken of in the context of preaching, except by those reflecting on his “third heaven experience.”** But a careful study of this experience would reveal that Paul experienced what would today be referred to as an **“out of the body”** experience. There is no doubt that this experience, of seeing Paul being raised from the dead, must have had a tremendous impact on Timothy’s conversion experience. It is also obvious from Scripture that, after his conversion, Timothy became an avowed follower of Paul.

**Timothy was a man who had a good reputation.** In fact Acts 16:25 says, "He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.” As Timothy worked with Paul he became one in whom Paul had the utmost confidence, as seen in Philippians 2:19-23, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.”

It is a joy of every pastor to have wonderful friends in the church where he pastors. And that is certainly true here at Mountain Grove Baptist Church. You have loved us with warm hearts and loving deeds, and I hope to prove worthy of your love and trust.

But, in this setting, Paul is talking about his relationship with a fellow helper. In other words, Timothy was on his staff, sotospeak. Ladies and gentlemen, there is nothing more meaningful to a pastor than to have a faithful and trusted staff! And I have one of the very best!

Look at verses 34, "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia - remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith."

The last time we heard anything concerning the church at Ephesus, was in Acts chapter 20, when Paul had called for the elders to meet with him. The church at Ephesus evidently was a spiritual powerhouse, and was moving out for the cause of Jesus Christ, but let me remind you that the devil is never idle. I am reminded of the story that Jesus told in Matthew 13:25, "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." Ladies and gentlemen, some of our greatest victories are followed by defeat.

With that truth in mind, Paul commissioned this young preacher, Timothy, to untiringly declare the glorious gospel of the grace of God and salvation by faith. He was not to give heed to fables nor to listen to endless genealogies, nor get "bogged down" in arguments and endless questions.

One of the best ways to make sure that the Bible is *not* being taught, is for Satan to keep a church, or a Sunday School class, or a Life Group, constantly in an argument over some trivial matter of doctrine. Listen to me very carefully, a "preacher" is supposed to "preach." Today, there are those churches and teachers that spend so

much time trying to defend some "gift of the Spirit" or some "denominational doctrine" that they have no time left to share the gospel.

Paul was concerned about those people that were always talking and arguing about what was, and what was not, sin, according to the Law! Folks, we haven't changed very much from the early church. Today we still have those people that will spend hour after hour arguing about whether or not it is a sin to smoke, or to drink, or to wear long hair, or to wear short dresses, or not to tithe, or to play ball or fish on Sunday, or to watch television. Paul is saying that if we are spending all of our time arguing with other Christians, then we are just wasting our time! Usually, when you win a religious argument, you lose a friend! So, why not agree on those things that bring glory to Jesus and let the others take care of themselves?

When I study the Word of God, I discover that the mission of Jesus Christ was to "save sinners." Can we, as a church, declare that our mission should be any less than to point men to that same Savior? The heart of what I am saying is seen in the words of Paul, as recorded in Romans 9:3, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh."

Our church has drawn a certain amount of criticism for having singings, riding Harleys inside, etc. Someone once asked the question, "How far will we go to get people saved?" Paul indicated that he would be willing to spend eternity in hell if that would result in his "people" being saved!

How far will this church go to see people saved? I cannot answer that question for every member! But I can answer that question for this pastor. I will try any program, use any method, and go to any length that I know will not degrade the Gospel, to see people saved! Why? Because I know that 2 Peter 3:9 tells me that it is the will of God that every man, woman, boy or girl be saved! And that is the mission and ministry of this church!

