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A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE

Reading: 1 Timothy 1:1-11

55. THE BOOK OF 1 TIMOTHY

“ Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.” That advertisement appeared in a London newspaper and thousands of men responded. It was signed by the noted Arctic explorer Sir Earnest Shackleton, and that was what made the difference. If the Lord Jesus had advertised for workers the announcement might have read something like this.

“ Men and women wanted for difficult task of helping to build my church. You will often be misunderstood even by those working with you. You will face constant attack from an invisible enemy. You may not see the results of your labour and your full reward will not come till after all your work is completed. It may cost you your home, your ambition and even your life.” In spite of the demands the Lord makes He receives *“ the applications,”* of many who gladly give their all for Him. Timothy whose name means *“ one who honours God,”* was one young man who responded to Christ's call to build His church. Now who was Timothy ? Timothy was probably from Lystra. He was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother Eunice.

(Acts 16:1-2) He probably was saved during Paul's first missionary journey about fifteen or so years of age.

(Acts 14:19-20) His father seemed to have died when he was young, resulting in him being raised by his godly mother Eunice and his saintly granny Lois. These two wonderful women instilled into the boy a good grounding in the things of God. *When Paul came back to Lystra on his second missionary journey Timothy was nearly twenty.* Even at this early age he was showing great potential for he *“ was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.”* (Acts 16:2) It was here that Timothy was added to Paul's missionary team. Timothy was to be Paul's disciple, friend and co-labourer for the rest of the apostle's life, ministering with him in Berea (Acts 17:4) Athens (Acts 17:15) Corinth (Acts 18:5 2 Cor 1:19) and accompanying him on his trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4) He was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment and went to Philippi (2:19-23) after Paul's release. When Paul was back in prison again for the last time we find him urging Timothy to hurry to his side. (2 Tim 4:21)

Tradition tells us that Timothy lived until about 70 years of age and that he was martyred by the Ephesian idolaters for protesting against their licentiousness and idol worship. So much for the man what about this letter ? Well, I want you to think about,

1. The Background to this Letter:

The Book of Acts closes with Paul a prisoner in Rome. He was tried and acquitted probably in A.D. 63. When the

great fire of Rome broke out in A.D. 64 Paul was on a fourth missionary journey (A.D. 63-67) which took him to Philippi (Phil 2:24) to Colossae (Philm 22) and perhaps on to Spain. (Rom 15:28) He then came back to Ephesus where he found that the heresies he had anticipated (Acts 20:28-30) had already taken root. Leaving Timothy behind to deal with the problems that had arisen Paul went on to Macedonia from where he wrote Timothy this letter to help him carry out his task in the church. (3:14-15) Now that is 1. But what is,

2. The Burden of this Letter:

What is Paul's burden as he writes to “ *His son in the faith,* ” ? I mean here is a young pastor/teacher facing, many difficult problems in a “ *big city church.* ” Timothy was a young man seeking to pastor older people (4:12 5:1-2) and this was not an easy thing to do. Timothy greatly missed Paul and wanted to quit. (1:3 2 Tim 1:4) Timothy was prone to neglect his pastoral duties and his devotional life as a Christian leader (4:11-16) So keeping this all in mind what was Paul's burden for Timothy and the church ? Well, the basic theme of the book is summarized in (3:15) *Here is Paul's reason for writing to Timothy.* The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Paul's imagery may have referred to the magnificent temple of Diana (Artemis) which was supported by 127 gold plated marble pillars. The word translated “ *ground,* ” appears only here in the New Testament and denotes the foundation on which a building rests. You see, here is the function of the church. The church upholds the truth of God's revealed Word. The “ *truth,* ” is the content

of the Christian faith recorded in Scripture and summed up in (3:16) Now I wonder have we grasp this clearly ? Alan Cairns in his Book “ **A Sure Foundation,** ” states, “ *the church of God in this world is the upholder of the truth. That is the basic function of every true church of Jesus Christ. There are many important tasks for the church to perform, but everything else is subservient to her fundamental responsibility to uphold the truth of God in Christ. How may we recognize a true church ? A true church of Christ upholds the truth of God.* ” Now is that the burden of Paul for Timothy and the Ephesians. 1:2:

3. The Benefits of this Letter:

Along with 2 Timothy and Titus these letters are known as “ *the pastoral epistles.* ” No doubt they contain much information that is helpful for pastors but they also focus on the need for elders and deacons and they expect a number of men to be appointed as elders. Moreover in this book Paul deals with the role of women in the church. He talks about members, ministers and money. So the benefits of this book are numerous. I have divided it into five sections.

(1) DOCTRINE DEFENDED 1:1-20

Now let's keep in mind that as Paul writes to Timothy he is aware of the problems he faces in the church. Paul is aware to the perils he faces. Paul is alive to the possibilities that lie around him. Paul is alert to the privileges that lie around him and Paul is now advising Timothy in the position he is taking over. And the first

thing that he deals with is doctrine. Now everything has its foundation here. If truth is missing if the teaching is wrong, all is wrong. Now the Bible is a book of doctrine. Do you see how Paul describes it in (1:10) ? “ *Sound doctrine,*” literally means “ *healthy teaching,*” that is teaching that promotes spiritual health. Our word “ *hygiene,*” comes from this Greek word. (2 Tim 1:13 4:3 Titus 1:9, 13 2:1-2, 8) So Paul begins here with doctrine. Indeed he says to Timothy “ *O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy trust.*” (6:20) The word “ *keep,*” means “ *guard,*” “ *that which is committed to thy trust,*” is a single word that simply means the deposit. What is Timothy’s responsibility ? “ *To guard the deposit,*” that God had committed to him through Paul. What is the deposit ? Well, look at (1:11) or “ *the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God with which I was entrusted.*” Paul then proceeds to expound the leading truths of this gospel in (1:15 2:5-6 and 3:16)

You see, God had given the gospel message, the deposit of truth to Paul (1:11) who had in turn committed it to Timothy (1:18-19) Timothy was to guard it and pass it on to others (2 Tim 2:2) My is this not the task of the church today ? So Paul begins by defending doctrine for notice there was,

(a) *THE PERVERSION OF SOUND DOCTRINE:*
1:1-4

Look if you will at (1:3-4) Do you recall what Paul said when he was saying goodbye to the elders of Ephesus ? He said, “ *For I know that after my departing shall*

grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.”

(Acts 20:29-30) Some Bible scholars believe that the false teachers were elders, (1:7 3:2 5:17) perhaps Hymenaeus and Alexander (1:19-20) Whatever Paul identified this false teaching as “ *fables and endless genealogies,*” (1:4) These false teachers were using the Old Testament law, and especially the genealogies to manufacture all kinds of novelties and these new doctrines were leading people astray. Do you see that phrase ?

“ *Rather than godly edifying,*” we could translate it “ *Rather than God’s saving plan which is by faith.*” This heresy which was based on Jewish legalism struck a blow at the gospel of saving faith. You see, all the belief systems of the world fall into two classes. *There is the gospel of divine accomplishment, that Christ accomplished salvation apart from human effort.*

There is the religion of human achievement where men attempt to gain salvation by their own works. It seems that these false teachers at Ephesus offered a way to God which required human achievement. And Paul was having none of it. “ *Charge some that they teach no other doctrine.*” My is this not our responsibility ? To warn people against “ *things contrary to sound doctrine.*”

To lift up the standard of God’s Word, to oppose the encroachments of error. To recognise false doctrine. To reprove false teachers. To resign from them. Indeed to receive them not. (2 John 10) (a)

(b) *THE PURITY OF SOUND DOCTRINE: 1:5-12*

Paul refers to it in (6:3) as “ *the doctrine which is according to godliness.*” Sound doctrine leads to sound living, which is godliness. In the church at Ephesus where Timothy was ministering, certain people were spreading teaching of their own that was contrary to Scripture. Instead of producing love, purity, a good conscience, and sincere faith, these novel doctrines were causing division, hypocrisy and all sorts of problems. It seems that some were trying to control the conduct of the Christians through regulations that is legalism. But Paul says the law is made for the unrighteous not the righteous. *The lawful use of the law is to expose, restrain and convict the lawless. The Law cannot save lost sinners it can only reveal their need for a Saviour.* When a sinner trusts Christ he is freed from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:10-14) and the righteous demands of the Law are met by the indwelling Spirit as the believer yields to the Lord.(Rom 8:1-4)

My do we not need to listen carefully to ensure that what is said is Scriptural ? To ensure that what is sung is Scriptural ? Far too many songs not only teach no doctrine but may teach false doctrine. A singer has no more right to sing a lie than a teacher has to teach a lie. (a) (b)

(c) *THE POWER OF SOUND DOCTRINE: 1:12-17*

It is the “ *glorious gospel,*” (1:11) that saves lost sinners. Paul had experienced the power of the gospel and had been entrusted with the ministry of the gospel. (1:11) Timothy was disturbed because he thought he was too young and lacked the necessary qualifications for

ministry. “ *Look at me,*” says Paul “ *I was a blasphemer and a murderer before God saved me. If the grace of God can make a missionary out of a murderer then it can make a success of you.*” Are you here tonight despairing of your unsaved family ? Do you think they are too hard for the Lord ? Well, do you see what Paul says here ? He says his conversion is “ *a pattern.*” (1:16) It’s just an example of what God can do for lost sinners. Here is a conversion that is a picture of all conversions. We see here that no man is too bad for the redeeming grace of God to transform. No wonder Paul bursts forth into song. “ *Now unto the King eternal, immortal invisible the only wise God be honour and glory for ever and ever Amen.*” Do you feel like that ? Paul concludes this section with,

(d) *THE PERSEVERANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE: 1:18-20*

For he charges Timothy. He reminds him that God has chosen him for ministry. Some of the prophets in the local church had been instructed to single Timothy out and ordain him for special service. (Acts 13:1-3 4:14 2 Tim 1:6) He’s saying “ *Timothy God has equipped you for battle.*” I wonder like Timothy, do you want to resign ? Almost every Christian worker at one time or another has wanted to quit. But as Dr. Raymond Edman former president of Wheaton College used to say, “ *It is always too soon to quit.*” Paul says Timothy “ *Labour in the word and doctrine.*” It means “ *work at it.*” My in an age when many say “ *It does not matter what you believe,*” God says “ *Study sound doctrine, stress sound*

doctrine, support sound doctrine and stand for sound doctrine.”

2. DEVOTION DESCRIBED 2:1-15

You see, Paul turns from the church and its doctrine to the church and its devotions. He has now some things to say about prayer, preaching and position within the church. Notice that he deals here with,

(a) The Practice of Worship in the Church: 2:1-8

In (Ch 1) Paul’s emphasis is on the *Word*. In (Ch 2) his emphasis is on *prayer*. You see, the two main ministries of the pastor/teacher are the Word of God and prayer. Warren Wiersbe says, “ *It is sad to see churches robbing their pastors of these important ministries by keeping them busy promoting a program, pleasing people and practising church politics. If the churches would simplify their organization and purify their motives the pastors would be able to a spiritual work for the glory of the Lord.*” Do you recall the desire of the apostles, “ *But we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.*” (Acts 6:4) The Word enlightens us, prayer enables us. The Word instructs us, prayer inspires us. The Word brings light, prayer brings heat, so there is to be this balanced ministry of the Word of God and prayer. Can you see here,

The Why of Prayer: “ *First of all,*” that indicates priority. One pastor said, “ *If I announce a banquet a dinner people will come out of the woodwork to attend but*

if I announce a prayer meeting I’m fortunate if the ushers show up.” God wants us to pray for our praying has an effect nationally (2:2) and spiritually (2:4)

The What of Prayer: “ *Supplications,*” those are requests. “ *Prayers,*” is a general term suggesting reverence. “ *Intercessions,*” suggests petitions. “ *Giving of thanks,*” for who God is and what he does for us.

The “ Who,” of Prayer: For Kings: the godless Nero was on the throne at this time. “ *For all in authority,*” for the government and its members. “ *For all men,*” (2:4-7) We need to pray for the salvation of all men on the basis of the work of Jesus Christ. (2:5-7)

The “ How of Prayer,” (2:8) It’s to be *Without Delay:* “ *I will therefore that men pray,*” and men are certainly to take the lead. It’s to be *Without Defilement:* “ *Holy hands,*” It’s to *Without Discord:* “ *Without wrath,*” It’s to be *Without Doubting:* “ *without wrath and doubting.*” My much prayer much power, no prayer no power. (a)

(b) The Place of Women in the Church: 2:9-15

You know the Christian faith like no other elevated the position of women and children. Instead of criticising Paul for these instructions women ought to thank God for the blessing the Christian faith has been to women around the world. But no Paul’s teaching has been rejected out of hand by modern feminists. They say “ *Paul was a crusty old bachelor,*” who was anti-women. Perhaps we need to

keep in mind the three fold headship in the local assembly. 1. The Headship of Christ over the body: (Col 1:18) 2. The Headship of the Elders over the flock: (Acts 20:28) 3. The Headship of the Man over the Woman: (1 Cor 11:1-16) Now keeping that in mind Paul says that the ladies are to be marked by Modesty: don't major on the external but the internal. Now this does not mean that a woman should neglect herself. Some women think it's a mark of spirituality to look like an unmade bed. Vance Havner once said " *To be all out for God you don't have to look all in.*" Christian women can dress smartly modestly with an outfit that does not accentuate the precise shape of her body, she can dress distinctly so as to maintain the distinction of the sexes. But remember external beauty is passing, internal beauty is permanent, the former is attractive to the world, the latter is pleasing to God. She is to be marked by Humility: Do you see (2:11-12) The word " *silence*," denotes quietness.

" *To teach*," denotes not a single act but a process and means that Paul does not permit a woman to assume the office of a public teacher in the assembly. (Titus 2:3-4 2 Tim 1:5) My we are equally important within the assembly but God made us for different roles and responsibilities. And in the church God has given the leadership to men. Indeed in (Ch 3) we have

(3) DUTY DEFINED 3:1-16

You know everything rises or falls with leadership, whether it be a family or a local church. If the local church it is to do its task effectively it must have

leadership and this implies organization. Do you know what constitutes a New Testament church ? Well, according to (Phil 1:1) it is comprised of saints, ruled by godly elders and served by faithful deacons. You see, Paul is speaking here of the church and its duties,

(a) In Relation to Elders: 3:1-7

Now the terms " *pastor*," " *elder*," and " *bishop*," refer to the same office. (Acts 20:17, 28 Titus 1:5, 7) Elder is a translation of the Greek word *presbuteros* translated " *presbytery*," in (4:14) It simply means an older mature person. Bishop comes from the Greek word *episkopos* and means " *overseer*." The local pastor then was an elder in terms of spiritual maturity and an overseer in terms of ministry. And it was usual for churches to have more than one elder or pastor. The qualifications given here by the Lord are very high but they do not include what seems so important in so many churches today, success in business.

His Personal Qualifications:

" *Blameless*," does not mean sinless. It means " *that cannot be laid hold of*." That is there is nothing the enemy can lay hold of to hinder the work or ruin the witness. " *the husband of one wife*," a one woman man, morally pure. " *Vigilant*," means " *temperate*," " *sober*," means " *self control*," " *Of good behaviour*," means " *orderly*," " *given to hospitality*," means " *to love strangers*," " *Apt to teach*," that is one who hard in his studies and proclamation. (5:17) This is the one qualification that sets him apart from the deacons.

“ *Not given to wine,* ” means he does not have a reputation as a drinker. “ *No striker,* ” does not use physical force.

“ *Not greedy of filthy lucre,* ” he must not be money hungry. Patient, not contentious free from covetousness, putting Christ first in his life.

His Family Qualifications:

In (3:4) He should be the head of his household ruling his own house well.

His Church Qualifications:

He must not be a new convert, if he is Satan may puff him up with pride. The elders must have a good testimony even among the unsaved lest his bad reputation tear down the witness of the church. My it's not easy to serve as a pastor or elder but it is much easier if your character is all God wants it to be. (a) But speaks of the church and its duties,

(b) In Relation to Deacons: 3:8-13

“ *Likewise,* ” indicates that God has equally important standards for the deacon. The English word “ *deacon,* ” simply means “ *servant.* ” But please notice that the qualifications for this noble office are in many respects similar to those of an elder. Paul talks about,

His Character: he must be dignified, not double tongued, not a tale bearer speaking one thing to one person and something different to another.

His Conviction: he must be sound in his doctrinal beliefs and sincere and conscientious in his Christian witness

His Calling: a deacon must first be proved before being appointed to this exalted office. He must be of sterling character and his life both in the home and the world must be beyond reproach. Did you notice that word “ *used,* ” in (3:10) ? It tells us that the deacon's office is to be used not just filled. Brethren, if you're just going to fill a post rather than exercise a ministry you'd be better not in it all.

His Companion: for his wife also be dignified, discreet and thoroughly trustworthy.

His Conduct: for his moral and parental standards must be above reproach and are identical with those of an elder. My is it not a serious matter to serve the Lord in the local church ? Do we not need to search our own hearts to ensure that we are qualified and fit for such service ?

(c) In relation to Members: 3:14-16

For in this closing section of (Ch 3) Paul shows the importance of the local church by describing it under three pictures. It's the “ *house of God,* ” that speaks of our Family: and Paul wrote this letter to teach us how to behave as members of God's family. It's “ *the pillar and ground of truth,* ” that's speaks of our Function: for we are to uphold the truth in an age of apostasy. Its “ *the body of Christ,* ” that speaks of our Focus: this closing verse is perhaps an early Christian hymn, memorized by the saints for their worship services. It's a summary of the person

and work of the Lord Jesus and the idea is that the local church should bear witness to Him. My is this not an exciting challenge ? For this local church, for your local church to witness of Christ to lost sinners at home and abroad ? (1) (2) (3)

(4) DANGER DECLARED 4:1-16

Paul had warned the Ephesian elders that false teachers would invade the church (Acts 20:28-31) and now they had arrived. Here we have,

(a) The Description of False Teachers: 4:1-5

They are marked by apostasy, that's what the word "*depart*," means. It's a wilful turning away from the truth of the Christian faith. My *an apostate is not someone struggling to believe but one who wilfully abandons the biblical faith he had once professed.* Paul also points out the source of this apostasy, not "*the growing intelligence of scholars*," but the satanic influence of demons so that professed believers deny the basic doctrines of the Bible. Did you notice that they were teaching a false piety ? *Namely abstaining from marriage and abstaining from meat.* They taught that an unmarried life was more spiritual than a married life and that certain meats were taboo, that if you eat them you were not spiritual. The fact that God called His own Creation "*good*," did not interest these teachers. (Gen 1:10,12 18, 21, 25)

My beware of any teaching that tampers with God's institution of marriage and beware of any teaching that tampers with God's creation. God in His Word has declared that all foods are clean (Gen 1:29-31 9:3 Mk 7:14-23 1 Cor 10:23-26) and through prayer the Christian thanks God and eats the food to His glory. (1 Cor 10:31) In contrast to these false teachers Paul gives us,

(b) The Description of Faithful Teachers: 4:6-16

You see, a godly under-shepherd will warn church members concerning apostasy (4:6) He will keep spiritually fit (4:7-11) Be a godly role model in all that he does. (4:12) Continue to publicly read, teach and preach the Word of God. (4:13) Give himself wholly to the ministry (4:15) and keep close check on his own life. (4:16) Do you know something ? As you review this passage you can see that Paul expected Timothy to build the church on what ? The Word of God. To study it, to teach it, and to live it. Wise is the church that seeks to protect the pastors time so that he has opportunity to study and pray. And happy is the man who spends time in the Word for he will not only grow himself, he will grow the church. (1) (2) (3) (4) and finally,

(5) DIRECTION DISCLOSED 5:1-6:21

For in these closing chapters Paul gives direction,

(a) IN RELATION TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD:

Did you know that the first problem in the early church was a modern one ? A group of church members felt neglected by the pastoral team (Acts 6:1) I once heard a certain pastor described as “ *a man who is invisible during the week and incomprehensible on Sunday.*” Here Paul gives Timothy some instruction in relation to older saints: (5:1-2) to widows: (5:3-16) to elders: (:17-25) to slaves: (6:1-2) and to the rich: (6:16-19) (a) But then he gives direction,

(b) IN RELATION TO THE MAN OF GOD:

Do you see what Paul calls this young pastor ? “ *But thou O man of God.*” (6:11) What an encouragement. But do you see the three exhortations ? ***Flee, follow and fight.*** Sometimes the best thing that a Christian can do is run. Is this not what Joseph did when Potiphar’s wife tempted him ? (Gen 39:1) Is this not one of the things that often brings pastors down ? *There is girls, then there is gold* (6:10) *and there is glory.* But we have got to flee, then we must follow and then we must fight. Paul points to the wonderful example of Christ when He made His courageous witness before Pilate. (Jn 18:33-37) “ *We serve the King of Kings,*” says Paul. “ *Be faithful Timothy until He comes and when He comes He will honour you for your good work.*”

My what a message Timothy has for our day. For we too are called to guard the gospel. My ***some people want to ritualize the gospel, some people want to socialize the gospel, some people want to rationalize the gospel and some people want to politicize the gospel.***

But we are upon to guard the gospel. Paul says “ *I am set for the defence of the gospel.*” (Phil 1:17) That gospel, that God gave to Paul, who in turn committed it to Timothy (1:18-19) who in turn was to guard it and pass it on to others. (2 Tim 2:2) Is this not the task of the church ? Is this not your task and mine ? Charles Wesley put it like this,

A charge to keep I have

A God to glorify

A never dying soul to save

And fit for the sky

To serve the present age,

My calling to fulfill:

Oh, may it all my pow’rs engage

To do my Master’s will!

Arm me with jealous care,

As in Thy sight to live;

And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare

A strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray,

And on Thyself rely,

Assured, if I my trust betray,

I shall forever die.

