

July 2, 2017

“Love Loves the Truth”

Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 1:1-11 (NASB)

Cross References: Romans 7:7-16; 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4; Galatians 3:21-29; 1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:23; 3:16; 4:4; Titus 1:14; James 3:1-2; 2 Peter 1:16

Lesson Idea: We should love the truth and hold to the sound teaching of the Gospel.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

June 25 Psalms 66-69	June 26 Psalms 70-73
June 27 Psalms 74-77	June 28 Psalms 78-79
June 29 Psalms 80-85	June 30 Psalms 86-89
July 1 Psalms 90-95	July 2 Psalms 96-102

Background:

From *Halley's Bible Handbook* (see more from Halley at the end of this lesson)

1 Tim. 1 **FALSE TEACHERS** The false teachers (vv. 3–11). When Paul left Ephesus seven years before, he had warned that savage wolves would ravage the Ephesian church (Acts 20 :29– 30). Now they had appeared in full force and constituted Timothy's main problem. They appear to have been the same brand of false teachers as those whom Titus had to deal with in Crete, who based strange teachings on apocryphal Jewish legends connected with Old Testament genealogies.

From David Guzik, *1 Timothy 1*

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ: Paul, in his self-description, emphasized his credentials (*apostle*) and authority (*by the commandment of God*). He did this both as a personal encouragement to Timothy and so the letter could be used as a letter of reference before any erring Ephesian Christians.

It seems that 1 Timothy was written by Paul to Timothy sometime after his release from Roman imprisonment as described at the end of Acts, and written from Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3). Apparently, after his release (hoped for in Philemon 1:22 and Philippians 1:25-26 and Philippians 2:24), Paul returned to the city of Ephesus. There he discovered that during his absence Ephesus had become a storm center of false teaching (a sad fulfillment of the prediction he had made to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-30).

Paul probably dealt with the leaders of the heresy personally, but soon found it necessary to leave for Macedonia. He then left Timothy in charge of affairs at Ephesus, as his own personal representative. He knew that Timothy had a tough job to carry out, so he hoped that this letter would both equip and encourage him in the task.

“The use of this official title is an indication that the Pastoral Epistles were not merely private letters, but were intended to be read to the Churches committed to the charge of Timothy.” (White)

1 Timothy 1:1-11

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,

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

3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, 4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. 5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, 7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

DISCUSSION:

- v 1. How did Paul receive his apostleship? How does Paul describe God and Jesus? What do those descriptions mean to us today?

- v 2. How did Paul describe Timothy and why? Do you have any children in the faith? Why or why not? How do you define *grace*, *mercy*, and *peace*?
- v 3. For what reason did Paul urge Timothy to remain in Ephesus?
- v 3-4. What kinds of strange doctrines were being taught at the time? (see 1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:23; 4:4; Titus 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16) How do people today build doctrines upon speculation? How do we guard against those doctrines? (see Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:16)

NOTE: from Guzik:

No other doctrine: Paul left the Ephesian Christians with a particular set of teachings (which he had received from Jesus and the Old Testament). He was concerned that Timothy did everything he could to make sure the Ephesians continue in that doctrine.

Paul did this because doctrine is vitally important to God. Today, what one believes - that is, their doctrine - is staggeringly unimportant to most people. This spirit of the modern age has also heavily influenced Christians. We live in a day where Pilate's question *What is truth?* (John 18:38) is answered today, "*Whatever it means to you.*" But truth is important to God, and should be important to us.

That you may charge some: Paul's concern was not primarily that Timothy himself would begin to teach wrong doctrine. His concern was that Timothy would allow others to spread these other doctrines. Timothy had to stand firm against difficult people and charge some that they teach no other doctrine. No wonder he felt like leaving Ephesus.

In the ancient Greek, *charge* is a military word. It means "To give strict orders from a commanding officer." (Wiersbe) Timothy wasn't to present the option of correct doctrine to these some in Ephesus. He was to command it like a military officer.

Nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies: It seems that the great danger of these teachings (fables and endless genealogies) was that they were silly distractions. Timothy had to remain in Ephesus so that he could command others to ignore these speculative and silly distractions.

It wasn't that there was an elaborate anti-Jesus theology rising in Ephesus. It was more that they tended to get carried away by emphasizing the wrong things. Paul wanted to prevent the corruption that comes when people grant authority to fables and endless genealogies

instead of true doctrine. Silly distractions are also dangerous, because they take the place of godly edification which is in faith.

Perhaps the endless genealogies had to do with Gnostic-type theories of "emanations" from God. Perhaps they were connected with Jewish-type legalism that sought righteousness by virtue of one's ancestry. Or perhaps he had in mind doctrinal systems based on mystic readings of Old Testament genealogies.

Ancient Jewish writings have been discovered, which delve into the most complex genealogies, connecting them with wild speculations about spiritual mysteries. A consuming interest in these kinds of things will crowd out godly edification which is in faith.

Cause disputes rather than godly edification: The eventual fruit of these man-made diversions is evident. Though they may be popular and fascinating in the short term, in the long run they don't build up the body of Christ in faith.

- v 5. What did Paul say the goal of our instruction should be? How do you tell if your love comes from a pure heart? How do you keep a good conscience and a sincere faith?

NOTE: from Guzik

The purpose of the commandment: The purpose of the law is found in its inward work upon the heart, not in mere outward observance. Without this understanding, it is easy to become shallow legalists, who are only concerned with how things look on the outside.

Love from a pure heart: This suggests the idea that the problem in Ephesus was along Jewish-type legalistic lines. They misunderstood the commandment and the law.

If spending time in God's word isn't producing love from a pure heart, a good conscience, or sincere faith in us, something is wrong. Legalism may make us twist God's word, so that instead of showing love we are harsh and judgmental; instead of having a good conscience we always feel condemned knowing we don't measure up; and instead of sincere faith we practically trust in our own ability to please God.

- v 6. How do people begin straying from a sincere faith?
- v 7. Why should people be careful about their desire to be teachers? (see James 3:1-2) Why would people

make confident assertions about things they don't understand? How do we guard against that?

- v 8. What did Paul mean when he spoke about "the Law?" How do we use it "lawfully?"
- v 9. What was the purpose of the Law? Why? (see Romans 7:7-16; Galatians 3:21-29)
- v 9-10. What did Paul conclude about all of the sins he listed? How many of these are accepted in our society today? Why should they not be accepted in the church?

NOTE: from Guzik

But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully: The purpose of the law is to show us our sin, not to lead us to righteousness (as in Galatians 3:24-25). It wasn't made for the righteous person (who walks by faith according to Galatians 3:11) but for the lawless and insubordinate, to show them their sin.

The idea isn't that the law has nothing to say to the righteous person, but that it especially speaks to the ungodly. On the phrase, The law is not made for a righteous person, Clarke observes that the word for made "Refers to the custom of writing laws on boards, and hanging them up in public places within reach of every man, that they might be read by all; thus all would see against whom the law lay."

For the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners: In Paul's mind sound doctrine and right conduct are vitally connected. These sinful actions are contrary to sound doctrine.

Many people will condemn anyone with standards - especially higher standards - as being a legalist. Having standards and keeping them does not make us legalists and obedience doesn't make us legalists. We are legalists when we think what we do is what makes us right before God.

- v 11. What does Paul maintain is the ultimate test for sound teaching? Why does all of our teaching to revolve around the "glorious gospel?" Who is entrusted with the gospel today?

APPLICATION:

- ✓ How do you reflect your love for the truth?
- ✓ Who are you helping to bring up in the faith? Or who is helping you grow in the faith?

Halley's Bible Handbook, Introduction to 1 Timothy

1 Timothy: Care of the Church at Ephesus

Key verses:

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. —1 TIMOTHY 4: 4– 5

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. —1 TIMOTHY 6: 6– 7

The Pastoral Letters

Three letters, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, are commonly called "the pastoral letters." First Timothy and Titus were probably written between Paul's first and second imprisonments, that is, between A.D. 61/ 62 and 67. Second Timothy was written during his second imprisonment in A.D. 67/ 68, shortly before his execution for his faith. . . These letters have, from the very beginning, been regarded as genuine writings of Paul.

Timothy

Timothy was a native of Lystra (Acts 16: 1). His mother was Jewish , his father Greek . We know that his mother's name was Eunice and his grandmother's name Lois (2 Timothy 1: 5). He was Paul's convert (1 Timothy 1: 2), and he joined Paul on his second journey, about A.D. 51 (Acts 16: 3). Timothy was a chosen servant of God (1 Timothy 1: 18). He was set apart by the elders and Paul (1 Timothy 4: 14; 2 Timothy 1: 6). As outlined below, Timothy was with Paul on many of his journeys and was named by Paul as the co-sender of six of his letters (2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon). Timothy accompanied Paul to Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, where he stayed until Paul sent for him to come to Athens (Acts 17: 14 –15). Then Paul sent him back to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3: 1– 2). By the time he returned from Thessalonica, Paul had gone to Corinth (Acts 18: 5; 1 Thessalonians 3 :6). He joined Paul in Corinth in the writing of the Thessalonian letters (1 Thessalonians 1: 1; 2 Thessalonians 1: 1).

Later, on the third missionary journey, Paul sent Timothy from Ephesus to Corinth (1 Corinthians 4: 17). Paul joined him in Macedonia, and Timothy joined in the

writing of 2 Corinthians (Acts 19: 22; 2 Corinthians 1: 1). He went part of the way with Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20: 4). Whether he accompanied Paul all the way to Jerusalem and Rome is not stated , but he appears with Paul in Rome (Philippians 1: 1; 2: 19– 22; Colossians 1: 1; Philemon 1).

Later he is in Ephesus, where this letter is addressed to him. He is urged to come to Rome (2 Timothy 4: 9). Whether he reached Rome before Paul's death in A.D. 67 or 68 is not known . Timothy is mentioned in Hebrews 13: 23 as having been released from prison.

Timothy appears to have been timid and retiring by nature, and not as well suited as Titus for handling troublemakers, and he was not in the best of health (1 Timothy 5: 23). He and Luke were Paul's two most constant companions. Paul loved him dearly and was lonesome without him. Tradition says that after Paul's death, Timothy's work was the care of the Ephesian church , and that he suffered martyrdom under Emperor Nerva or Emperor Domitian. This would make him a co-worker with the apostle John.

Ephesus

This is the city where Paul had done his greatest work, around A.D. 54– 57 (Acts 19). Some four years after he had left Ephesus, Paul had written the letter to the church at Ephesus, around A.D. 62. Now, a little later, probably about A.D. 65, he addressed this letter to Timothy about the work in Ephesus. Ephesus later became the home of the apostle John, where he wrote his Gospel, his letters, and possibly the book of Revelation.

The Occasion of the Epistle

When Paul said farewell to the Ephesian elders, he told them that they would not see him again (Acts 20: 25). But it seems that his long imprisonment changed his plans and that he did visit Ephesus again some six or seven years later, after his release from prison in Rome. Paul went on to Macedonia, leaving Timothy behind at Ephesus, expecting himself to return soon (1 Timothy 1: 3; 3: 14). But Paul was detained in Macedonia longer than he had planned (3: 15), and he wrote this letter of instruction about the work that Timothy was to do.

The Church Situation

Houses for Christian worship did not begin to be built until 200 years after the days of Paul, and church buildings did not come into general use until Constantine put an end to the persecutions of Christians. In Paul's day there were no church buildings. Churches met mostly in the homes of the Christians. The thousands of Christians in and around Ephesus met, therefore, not as one megachurch, or even in a few larger congregations, but in hundreds of small groups in various homes, each congregation under its own pastoral leadership.

The Pastors

There must have been hundreds of pastors in Ephesus. In Acts 20: 17 they are called elders; in this letter they are called bishops (meaning "overseers"; 3: 1). These are simply different names for the office held by leaders of congregations. Timothy's work was primarily with these congregational leaders. There were no seminaries to supply Paul with trained pastors; he had to develop his pastors out of his converts. Sometimes he got brilliant men, but most of his pastors were probably from the ordinary walks of life. He had to do the best he could with available material. Yet, without seminaries, without church buildings, and in spite of persecution, the church made more rapid progress than anytime since, because it had to keep its mind on the essentials of Christianity rather than on peripheral issues.



The Church at Ephesus

From the narrative in Acts 19, it appears that Paul had made a large number of Christian converts in Ephesus. In the years since his first visit, the number of converts had continued to grow, and in the next 50 years Christians became so numerous in Asia Minor that the pagan temples were almost abandoned. Within the first generation of the church, Ephesus became the numerical as well as the geographical center of Christendom, the region where Christianity won its quickest laurels.