

## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY: “No Other Doctrine” 1 Timothy 1

Scripture of Lesson: 1 Timothy 1: 1-20

### 1. Who was Timothy?

- a. Timothy was born of mixed parents: his mother was a Jewess and his father a Greek. He was so devoted to Christ that his local church of Lystra and Iconium recommended him to Paul, whereupon Paul inducted him into his ministry team [Acts 16: 1-5].
- b. Timothy was faithful to the Lord [1 Cor. 4: 17] and had a deep concern for God’s people [Phil. 2: 20-22].
- c. Paul appointed him as the responsible pastor of Ephesus area [1 Tim 1:3].
- d. Purpose of the letter: Paul wrote the first epistle to Timothy to encourage him in the ministry, to explain how a local church should be managed, and to enforce the ministerial authority over the church.

### 2. Three responsibilities of a pastor and congregation in a local church

#### a. Teach sound doctrine [1: 1-11]

- i Jesus Christ is not only our Lord but our “Savior [1:1],” a term used 10 times in Paul’s epistles. Paul also emphasized that Jesus Christ is our “hope [1:1]” –a fact that must have boosted Timothy’s spirit. When we feel discouraged, we need to remember that our only hope from the despairs of this life is Jesus Christ, who gives life over death and true consolation and reward in and after life.
- ii Timothy was commanded by Paul to teach the sound doctrine of Christ. The words “doctrine, teach, teacher, teaching” are mentioned over 30 times in Paul’s epistles. There were false teachers in Paul’s day who tried to entice people to mix the OT teachings of Mosaic laws, genealogy and fables [1:4] with the Christian beliefs. Today, there are Christian teachers who try to get people to believe they are not good enough unless good works are mixed in with the church traditions to “win” salvation or who deceive people into believing in a false promise of prosperity instead of the truth of God. On the other hand, the pulpit and the platform are mostly used for entertainment, nor for teaching of sound biblical doctrine and spiritual enrichment of the congregation.
- iii Paul writes the goal of the godly commandment is “charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned [1:5].” We need to test doctrines we hear on how they convey unfeigned motives and good heart/ conscience of the teacher. What is the motive of a prosperity gospel preacher? What is a church’s motive for emphasizing ‘works-based’ salvation doctrine? What is the purpose of enforcing certain legalism to the congregation? Paul pronounces that the doctrine he taught was “*according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust [1:11].*”

#### b. Proclaim the gospel [1: 12-17]

- i Paul uses the marvelous transformation in his own life to explain that the gospel of the grace of God really works. When you read Paul’s testimony [see also Acts 9:1-22, 22-21; 26:9-18], you begin to grasp the wonder of God’s grace and His saving power in any person who yields to the gospel of Christ.
- ii Paul describes himself as the persecutor of the church of Jesus Christ. He was “proud and insolent,” meaning he was a ‘bully.’ The basic cause of this behavior was “ignorance” and “unbelief” [1: 13]. He was a fervently religious man, but was heading in a wrong direction away from God’s truth. He had to be stopped and brought to the truth in Jesus Christ, who met Paul personally and presented Himself to Paul in a way that he came to a clear realization that he had been going the wrong way.
- iii Paul’s ignorance was not an acceptable excuse for his past behaviors. When Jesus prayed on the cross, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing,” the ignorance of the

perpetrators or the petition by the Lord did not save them. But they gave opportunities for their later salvation through God's grace. According to the Mosaic law, if one hurt someone not willfully but in ignorance, he had to bring a proper sacrifice for atonement of his sin.

iv Paul pronounced that he was saved through "exceeding abundant grace of God [1:14]." He obtained mercy through this grace extended to him [1: 16]. He realized that Christ had shown a great deal of long-suffering over many years to win his soul so that he could become an example to all believers [1:16]. If we perceive God has been patient toward us, let us not slight His patience and mercy being held out, but come to Him in full recognition of our sinful state and embrace His mercy and grace.

c. **Defend the faith [1: 18-20]**

i Where Timothy labored in Ephesus, which was the center of the Greek goddess Diana, most people worshipped her, the goddess of sexuality. It was not easy for the Christians to serve God in this pagan environment of decadent idol worship. But Paul charged Timothy to "fight the good fight" as a soldier of Christ and to hold onto "the faith and a good conscience [1: 19]."

ii What is "good fight"? We can fight a good fight only when we have the sense of mission as soldiers for Christ. And our fight is "good" when it is fought for God's cause and under God's principles, not following personal emotions or human causes. It is the kind of fight that will win "well done" from the Lord on the Awards Day. It is the kind that will bring joy and pleasure to God's heart, though it may require personal sacrifices and material losses.

iii Paul delivered some people to Satan—meaning, the ministry no longer labors for their salvation. It is a truly sad state to be in because such persons are now in the controlling influence of Satan and outside of God's help. There is a danger for a professing Christian to make a shipwreck of their life [1:19]. Let us walk circumspectly and in humility so that we are never outside the boundary of God's grace and mercy.

3. **Application for us**

- a. Let us discuss some of the impediments that stand against our defending the true faith as Christians.
- b. Did you ever feel that you were outside of God's grace and mercy and yet He reached out and brought you into His fold?