

Thoughts for Young Pastor
1 Timothy 1:12-20

Paul is writing to a young protégé to encourage him. Timothy wants a pastoral reassignment and Paul wants him to stay in Ephesus.

In this section of the epistle, Paul is offering positive and negative encouragement to Timothy.

12

*I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord,
because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,*

In verse 11 Paul reminds Timothy that God entrusted him with the gospel and that his encouragement to Timothy is just a reflection of that trust.

- God trusted him
- He is trusting Timothy

What does it mean to be trusted with the Gospel? What does it mean for

- Pastors
- Christians
- Fathers
- Mothers
- Christians at work
- Christians at school

Verses 11-12 are reflective and dominated by “*ego*”/I and “*me/me*”

- a) It is Jesus who strengthens Paul
- b) How did God find Paul “faithful” in order to “appoint” him to “his service?”

Paul didn’t oppose the church because he hated God but because he loved God. He did it in ignorance. Paul thought he was serving God by persecuting Christians. He was mistaken about Jesus and it’s for that reason, God had “mercy” (v 13) on him.

Even the OT distinguished between ignorant and intentional sin (Lev. 22:14; Num. 15:22-31)

Jesus prayed, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* (Lk 23:34)

It isn’t ignorance that saves us but it is grace that saves the ignorant

2 Timothy 1:3 – *I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience,*

Romans 10:3 - For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

And then Paul discusses his ‘faithfulness...’

13

*though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.
But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief*

- Blasphemer = speaking evil, abusive, slanderous
- Persecutor = violent aggressor / OH and not in secular literature
- Insolent opponent = a proud person who insults others or does them shameful wrong

Acts 8:1-3 - *And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.*

Acts 9:1-3a - *But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus*

"Paul's sin was not something which he tried to forget. ... Paul's sin was something which he refused to forget, for every time he remembered the greatness of his sin, he remembered the still greater greatness of Jesus Christ. It was not that he brooded unhealthily over his sin; it was that he remembered his sin to awaken rejoicing in the greatness of the grace of Jesus Christ."

William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, p. 55

Paul didn't love God. But he also didn't know that he didn't love God. He acted “ignorantly in unbelief”

- Ignorantly = *agnoeo* = to not know (agnostic) / to err or sin through mistake
- Unbelief = *apistia* (a = not / *pistia* = faith)

For these reasons, Paul “received mercy,” literally, “I was mercied.”

14

*and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with
the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

God gave Paul

- Grace to save
- Faith to believe
- Love to give

Acts 9:3-19 – **T**

Philippians 1:8 – *God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 4:19 – *my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!*

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 – *But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*

See how Paul's life changed? This super-abounding grace, faith and love are ours in Jesus also.

How? This mercy that Paul received, overflowed = *hyperpleonazo* = *hyper* = *super* & *pleonazo* = *abundant*

15

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

Foremost = *protos* = *first in rank or honor, chief or principle*

Hmmm. I'm not sure about that. There have been some really bad people in the Bible and otherwise.

“The fact is that it is always the characteristic of a true saint to feel himself a real sinner. The air in a room seems to be clear, but when it is penetrated by the sunlight it is seen to be full of dust and other impurities: and so as men draw nearer to God, and are penetrated by the light of God (1 John i. 5), they see more clearly their own infirmities, and begin to feel for sin something of the hatred which God feels for it.”

Ernest F. Brown, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 10.

16

But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

This is twice now that Paul reminds Timothy that he received mercy.

- He received mercy because he was ignorant
- He received mercy in order that Jesus might “*display his perfect patience as an example...*”

Foremost = *proto* = can also mean *first in time*

Romans 8:39 – *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

Firstborn = *prototokos*

Paul is a type. He is an example and model for Israel

Romans 10:1-4 is not only Paul's prayer. It is Paul's testimony.

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them [Israel] is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes

Look at this comparison:

Romans 9:31-32 - *Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.*

Philippians 3:4-9 – *I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*

17

*To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible,
the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever*

- *King of the ages*
- *Immortal*
- *Invisible*
- *The only God*

Be

- *Honor*
- *Glory*
- *Forever and ever*

What more might be said to eulogize God?

18

This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

"Here the believer is cast in the role of a soldier who is ordered out into battle. The weapons of this soldier, however, are not clever argumentation or inescapable logic, things that we might think best suited to debates with false teachers. On the contrary, Timothy is to avoid debates (2 Tim 2:23-25). Nor is the soldier's objective the destruction of his opponent. Appropriate strategy includes instructing, correcting erroneous views and urging repentance (see 2 Thess 3:14-15). The minister's weapons for this fight are the gospel and godly concern for the spiritual condition of the opponent. The goal is to protect the faith of those whom the false teachers seek to influence and, if possible, to win back those who have strayed (1:5). Only the gospel is sufficient for such work, as Paul has just taken great care to illustrate (1:11-16)."

Philip Towner – 1-2 Timothy & Titus, 58.

It is at this point, that Paul transitions from positive encouragements in vs 12-17 to to negative warnings in vs 18-20.

Entrust = paratithemi = to deposit

In verse 11, Paul states that he had been entrusted” with the gospel. There, it is the Greek word, *pisteuo = to trust, to have confidence*

the prophecies made about you...

Acts 16:1 – *Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.*

Paul wants Timothy to be able to say the same thing about himself at the end of his ministry that Paul could say about himself at the end of his ministry

2 Timothy 4:6-8 - *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

19a

holding faith and a good conscience

holding = echo = to have in the sense of wearing, to adhere, hold fast

Several things are in mind concerning ‘faith.’

- The faith = the Gospel
- Faith = as in faith in Jesus Christ
- Faith = It was said of John Knox that “*the consciousness of being chosen gave him courage.*”

Paul sinned in ignorance in persecuting the church before he knew Jesus. If Timothy leaves Ephesus he will not be keeping Paul’s charge or acting in faith toward Christ.

19

*By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith,
20 among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over
to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Paul intimates that if Timothy leaves Ephesus he will not be able to do so with a “clear conscience” and be making “shipwreck” of his faith.”

Shipwreck = enauageso

2 Corinthians 11:25 - *Three times I was shipwrecked*

As a pastor or a Christian, we must be good sailors and good soldiers (2 Tim 2:3).

20

*20 among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over
to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Paul cited two examples of this type of casualty, people who had not held faith and a good conscience and Timothy was apparently familiar with "Hymenaeus" (cf. 2 Tim. 2:17) and "Alexander."

"Alexander" was a common name, so this man may not be the same Alexander as the Jew in Ephesus (Acts 19:34-35) or the metal worker in Rome (2 Tim 4:14- 15).

Paul had turned them over to God's discipline because of their determination to continue living in a manner contrary to the will of God. This discipline would come on them by Satan.

The Bible speaks of being handed over to Satan positively (Job:1), Jesus (Mt 4:1-11), Paul (2 Cor 12:1-10) and negatively (1 Cor 5:3-5).

The blasphemy of which Paul speaks here is speaking ill of God. Hymenaeus and Alexander either left the faith altogether and then spoke ill of God or by their unfaithfulness, spoke ill of God’s sufficient grace.

In either case, Paul is using their example to encourage Timothy to faithfulness and a good conscience.

Conclusion:

This first chapter deals with matters of vital importance to every Christian, since we are all ministers of Jesus Christ. These matters are especially relevant to church leaders.

First, in the communication of God's Word, our primary responsibility (2 Tim. 4:2), we should avoid speculation and seek to represent God's intention accurately (vv. 3-11).

Second, we can face our task optimistically, since God has the power to transform even the worst of sinners into the greatest of saints (vv. 12-17). This is especially true of Timothy himself.