

27th July 2017

Introduction

Overview of 1 Timothy

Dear Brethren and Sisters of the Lord Jesus.

This easy to read, helpful and uplifting little letter, was written by Paul the Apostle possibly from Phillipi after he had been released from his first imprisonment at Rome, as we can seem to establish from a reading of the events described in Acts 16. It is that chapter which gives us a little background to this man Timothy, or Timotheus as it is in the Greek. Meaning God Honouring, Timothy was a young man described as a disciple when Paul met him at Lystra where Timothy probably lived, raised by his mother Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, who are described in the second letter for their faithfulness. However Timothy was not fully Jewish as his father was a Greek. Paul saw a great potential in this young man, and it seemed that he was without dependants, as Paul saw it appropriate to choose Timothy as a travelling companion. In order to conciliate the Jews, and make Timothy's future work much easier, with Timothy's consent of course, he circumcised him. Though it was not lawful, it was expedient in the circumstances. Expediency, is appropriate, even if it is sometimes painful, to further the gospel. Timothy did not have to do it, but was willing to if it would help to win others to Christ. Describing Timothy as my own son in the faith, Paul commissioned Timothy into the work of being an evangelist, Timothy evidently receiving the Holy Spirit gift in some form through the laying on of hands by the elders, he accompanied Paul through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia; also to Troas and Philippi and Berea , in fact Acts 16 right through to 19, shows how extensively Timothy travelled with him. But it was when Paul had the vision by the man from Macedonia come over and help us, that he left Timothy with

the newly formed ecclesia at Ephesus, and went to Macedonia, and then Philippi, from where he wrote this first letter. We can recall the keffuffle that erupted in Ephesus when Paul preached the gospel, uproar because the little shrines, and silver idols were in danger of being made redundant because of Paul's preaching of the vanity of false idol worship. This showed the volatility of the city. We note that it was Alexander who was brought forward to be beaten, and that he was a Jew. The core elders of Ephesus were Jewish, as well as Gentile, surrounded by hostility. Judaizers were bitterly opposed to what they saw as a new strange doctrine. Acts 20 reveals Paul's fears that soon of their own selves would arise men speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them. This is the background to the letter Paul writes to Timothy, as the ambassador for Christ, giving him encouragement, fortifying him, and strengthening him to bolster the ecclesia against declension and apostasy. In the letter he gives Timothy advice how to guide and teach, how to give structure and discipline to the ecclesia, focusing on the practical aspects, from behaviour, conduct, both personally and to a wider audience. Over and over again, he gives warnings for Timothy to be on guard for false teachers, to avoid such troublemakers, but there is much he offers Timothy by way of building up. Paul begins his letter in his usual way, we should not he does not begin by saying Hi Tim, how is going?

Instead, we note despite their close friendship, he addresses his brother formally. We should follow Paul's example somewhat, not overdoing it, but at the very least remembering whose we are and whom we serve, as Paul in Acts 27: 23 phrases it, and that we are not our own, but we are bought with a price, and that we are not addressing acquaintances but Christ's brothers and sisters, companions God has chosen for us. This greeting also gives the letter its authority, Paul's words were reflective of those of Christ. He does

however then make the letter personal, to Timothy my own son in the faith. He had given this young man ever such a lot of responsibility. It would not be easy for him, Paul felt the burden, it was different for him, he was now Paul the aged, and had endured afflictions for many years, but shoving he was with Timothy in such a close way, would have made Timothy very happy, and he would have read on, cheered, by such an accolade. But Paul, wastes no time, immediately he reminds Timothy of the reason he was sent there not for a holiday, but to get in front of those who were stirring up trouble and charge them to preach no other doctrine.

To charge is Greek *paragello*, to enjoin, it is a forceful word, to pressurise, to urge. It was not to be undertaken feebly and cautiously to avoid hurting sensitive feelings, but direct with urgency, evidently there was a lot of petty timewasting, and over analysing situations, instead of getting down to the actual teachings. This is a characteristic through to be expected by those leaning sympathetically to the Judaizers cause, or who had come from a Jewish background/ upbringing, as even today, Hassidic Jews will pore over a couple of words in the Talmudic writings, for days arguing about the nuances of the sentence, yet totally miss the weightier things of the law. This factor, Paul addresses in the first few verses of this chapter. The point of the commandment he writes is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: An echo of course of the Lord Jesus Christ who Paul preached to love God, with heart soul and mind, and neighbour as yourself, upon these Jesus said: On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. With this in mind he says, that in fact 9. Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, who love to obey, submit, and understand the reasons and purpose of the law, as a means to an end to teach Christ, but the law is seen as an end in

itself, by those who give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, for the habitual lawbreakers, where the law exposes the exceeding sinfulness of sin, verse 8 and 10. For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; beware he warned Timothy who desire to be teachers of the law, want all the kudos that comes with being an esteemed teacher, but lack the personal consistency and character to actually be able to teach by example, two example of which the apostle calls out: 20. *Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Instead of helping them, let them join the adversaries, let them learn the hard way, they have caused enough damage already. On the other hand, he uses his own example of once a wanabee teacher, but was then ignorant and unbelieving so was actually contrary to the Lord Jesus. But such is the power of the gospel, that the law operating on the heart can transform if permitted, so that and we note Pauls endearing humility, even he could change and be a useful tool in God's hand then there was hope for them all in Ephesus. He then promotes the greatest example of all, the long suffering of Jesus Christ, willing that all should come to repentance through him. Again, Paul uses the word charge. His time to *Timothy This charge, I urgently direct you I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare.* A theme Paul returns to towards the end of the letter 6: 12 *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.* It was to go into combat. But how ? Well first of all, through prayer: And a lot of it, for all men, we note, even

for the ruling powers, not for their sakes, but that it might be possible to have the peace to live a godly life. Praying for those in authority:! Quite the opposite of what the Judaizers and nationalists at the time were preaching! Praying even for these trouble makers speaking jangling words! Don't get over frustrated by this, but put it to the Lord in prayer, he is in control, and he will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; This great anti-trinitarian cannon ball for the spiritual soldier to store in his armoury. It is the gospel, the law that transforms, not these men-stealers and apostates, so do not be distracted by them Paul is saying. But lead by example, show holiness, through intimacy with Christ through prayer v8 without wrath and doubting. Worth noting here that Paul uses the word for men, in Greek is *andres*, that is males, for it is men who Paul teaches are to lead audibly in prayer, whereas elsewhere Paul teaches that women are to be silent in the ecclesia As he goes on here to explain also, that this same spiritual dignity, and consistency is to be echoed by the sisters. Again, not the outward appearance, the desiring to be teachers of the men, to look the part, same with the sisters, to be the real genuine disciple, it is the inner man verse 9, not the external beauty, instead modesty, and inner beauty.

This is how to show the difference to those who would apostatise. The sisters to teach the brethren not in word, but by example, the act of submission to Christ. In silence, as she submits to the man, so the man must submit to Christ. It is harder for a man to do this than the woman. Paul reminds of the series of events in Eden. Adam was not deceived. Eve was. But Adam was given the responsibility, Eve as not. Adam was condemned to death, he was given the commandment, Eve was not. Now Paul refers back to the mediator,

the example of Christ. 15. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. How so, it is not saved in child bearing, but the Greek is *dia*, that is through the childbearing. It was through the woman's seed that the hope of salvation came. Thus, if faith, love and holiness are the characteristics of the sisters, they too will be part of the mother of all living. In these first two chapters Paul is saying There is no place for ostentation or extravagance or any glorying in the flesh, in any form in amongst the disciples of Christ, in both men and women. But on the other hand: seeking to develop and increase in spiritual fruit is a good thing: Paul again demonstrates the practical deportment, as he has the sisters, so also those who would be leaders, and teachers. This is how it should be done: 3:1. *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.* We maybe notice the difference between this and the earlier mention of those desiring to be teachers. The former desire to be teachers is *ethelo*, more an impulsive desire, this desire is *oregomai*, to stretch oneself, to aspire to. a goal to reach for. The former is presumptuous, the latter not so. The former evident lack of qualification, the latter, here, Paul describes the ideal type of person.

2. *A bishop.* Overseer, supervisor, shepherd, then *must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach*; Paul paints a picture of a settled and well established individual, with few if any personal vices and who has a proven track record evidence of the ability required. To be blameless, that is *anepileptos* not culpable, without reproach. Not in a position where he as a representative of the truth can by their behaviour of character allow the truth to be undermined, as in verse 6,7, falling into condemnation, reproach and snare of the devil. Thus all the negatives listed cause reproach to come upon the stand of the ecclesia, and thus apply to all, whereas the positives are all

aspects which all members should also likewise strive for. The only difference is that a bishop must have a proven track record. It doesn't mean that other members are released from such restrictions.

This is an important point. The same applies to that of the deacon. *Diakanos*, an attendant, one who runs, a helper. Are not all to be helpers? Here it is evident that Paul is speaking of specific offices, but nevertheless, office or no office, all should be aspiring for the best gifts, the fruits of the Spirit. In these verses we see the conduct required, and how it filters into every aspect of the personal life, away from the ecclesia, family and even at work, yet the Apostle adds that thou *mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*. Every member is in the house of God wherever they are, whatever they are doing, and are members making up the pillar of truth. Paul's logic and force of words were designed to resound throughout generations and not just for the time then present. Paul then warns young Timothy, of the good warfare he needs to wage. The reproach of the devil, and the adversaries, the slanderers that would arise in their own midst. (Acts 20) The latter times, the end of the Jewish commonwealth, the great convulsions that were to come, a shadow of the times we live in now. The false doctrines arise because of the presence of seducing spirits. Apostasy does not arise in an obvious way, but seduction, persuasion, sliding it under the door, lies in hypocrisy, with seared consciences, Dangerous indeed, false motives as chapter 1 revealed to draw away disciples after them. The sub conscious, a conscience that is seared, is not using the word to guide it, but acts on fleshly impulse, is out of spiritual control, it is because of this that offences would arise. And looking back at the fulfilment of such a prophecy we are amazed at

the inspired prescience of the Apostle. Looking back in recent history we are able to see the seduction which took place, and we shudder at how close that danger nearly overcame and submerged the truth. Reminding the ecclesia of such things, Paul says 4:6 *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.* At this juncture, Paul focusses more on Timothy personally, rather than giving him instructions on how to advise others, he gives Timothy advice for himself.

Evidently the Greek culture of sport, and worship of the human body, had pervaded Ephesus, earing in mind, the city was home to the world's largest theatre seating 50000 spectators. Paul dismisses such idolatry *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth a little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Of infinitely greater value. Compared to the effort put into bodily exercise, how much more spiritual, much more easily neglected, but much more vital to our wellbeing, no wonder Paul says: *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.* Moreover, that it is this promise of the life to come that as Paul says is the reason for his labour and reproach, so it is the reason for the sacrifices, the way of life, the difficulties we encounter along the way, because v 10 *we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.* This was to be the continual message. *These things command and teach.* Again relating to Timothy but helpful for all. Let no man despise thy youth. Matter of interest. The Greek word was applied in fact to men of 40 years old and younger. Counter scepticism from the others questioning his age, counter it simply by example. The proof

of the pudding. The evidence will put to silence the critics, , the example to be sustained by spiritual food. Again he returns to this theme : give attendance to reading, to doctrine Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine. Doctrine, doctrine. Teaching, gospel. In our mind only of course possible by reading. We were reminded of this extreme necessity in several exhortations recently.

In chapter 5, Paul turns from advice directly for Timothy, and the advice is in regards to his relations to others within the ecclesia, and their conduct to one another . Though he is to be aware of those belittling his apparent youthfulness, he was not to reply as good as he gets. Instead, the view of Paul, is not to be goaded, but *Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.* The word for elder relates not to *presbeteros*, that is appointed elders, but in the general sense to anyone older than hem, which in his case may well have been quite a lot. The family spirit within the ecclesia, that is to rebuke with generosity, sensitivity, kindness, carefulness lest we be the one at fault, and lest we be accused of doing the same thing, ensuring there are no beams in our own eye first. Particular honour to be given to widows. Again the original is helpful. To prize, to add great value to.. widows indeed, that is widows who are without their own support group. These are vulnerable, can suffer from loneliness, and can be ignored because of the pace of life, but by virtue of their experience, and adaptability, resilience and forced independence have much wisdom to offer. Honour also has connotations of support. However those widows who still have family with them, then it is important that they requite their parents, that is another way of saying charity starts at home. Of helping everyone else, but leaving poor old mum at home to do

everything is completely the wrong spirit. On the other hand verse 8, those who fail in supporting their family through their own foolishness or indolence are also operating outside of the spirit of Christ, worse than an infidel, *apistos*, apostate, unbeliever. Worse than. If not adequately providing for own house, when there is no real mitigating reasons, then it is a bad situation. Even Paul when he was [reaching made a point of not relying on the handouts of others, but maintained a portable mobile trade, to maintain his own expenses as much as possible. Individuals, families, ecclesias to be autonomous, as far as possible, but, and we see there is a but, situations occur where help is required, the widows indeed are given as an example. Paul would have been made aware of the benefactors and support for widows in the Jerusalem ecclesia, he stood by as one of the appointed widow helpers was stoned to death under his direction. But the widows that could be supported, had to be over 60 years old, that is unable to work, to earn money, not receiving money from the estates of former husbands, and also of a faithful reputation. But younger widows were not to be included in the number to be supported, because they would be able to work. If left idle, their inexperience will cause them to be distracted, and they would fall into temptation, having too much time on their hands. Of course, the principle of what is said here by Paul applies to males as well, but in the society that existed in Paul's day, it was the female gender which was affected more.

Returning to the elders again, but this time not general but the *presbeteros*, those appointed to office and in positions of responsibility. Rule over in Greek is from two words which literally means to stand before, to preside, the aspect of service can be seen here, labouring in word and doctrine, worthy of double honour, to be prized, valued. Regard and concern for their wellbeing is to be

maintained seeing that much of their time is devoted to various and ranging aspects of the ecclesia, and as such care to be taken when levelling criticism. The phrase in verse 19, can be read as don't ever accept as an accusation against an elder unless verified by the evidence of two or three witnesses. Fighting the good warfare for the truth, against those without, and sin within is hard enough without having to contend with discontentment within the household. On the other hand, if those who accept the gravitas and bishopric of the faith, if they do err, and lead others astray, then only too right, they must be rebuked before all, as their example by weight of their position and standing matters, it cannot and must not be treated as a light thing or a small thing as Moses described it to the elders in the camp of Israel, who were likewise rebuked before all. Having given advice for teachers, brothers sisters, elders, widows, bishops, deacons, now Paul gives advice to another large section of the ecclesia.

Servants – all the ecclesia in the spiritual sense, in the literal sense many for in that society, many were slaves, or indentured trades, and had many onerous restrictions placed upon their freedom. Instead of chafing, rebelling, and causing bother, it was not the Christian way. Instead submission, and to give honour, even when it is not due, for returning to the spiritual how can we obey God who we cannot see if we do not obey those we can see. Continuing in a rebellious and resentful manner, as we can rail against those in power in this day and age, Paul says *He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds* That's pretty severe, but it is right, the man of God cannot be a rabble-rouser, or think to change times and seasons, politics belongs to the flesh, not to God. My servants are not of this

world says the Lord and Master, else they would fight. Instead their service and their fight is for the city and country which is afar off, and instead must be content with the situation God has placed them in. *But godliness with contentment is great gain.* For the same reason wealth has its many dangers sowing discontent, never enough, protecting this worlds goods, a distraction in itself. Flee covetousness, flee, as you would an enemy. Flee these things. When you have nothing there is less to worry about. For says Paul *the love of money is the root of all evil:* And we know this. Money they say makes the world go round. We know it is God who set the world in motion, but the love of money, seeking more and more, instead of giving more and more be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Once more Paul gives Timothy a charge *paragello*, to enjoin, to direct with urgency. That thou keep this commandment without spot. Timothy was to be an example, as Paul was. One of the key passages in this letter is 3:16 *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* Thus Paul's advice is a charge, a command, these are the wholesome words, the doctrine according to godliness as 6:3 describes, thus it is a charge to all servants, brothers, sisters of Christ, how to behave and how to treat others. Paul ends his letter most appropriately and with kindness Grace be with thee. Amen.