

## **Instructions to the Church**

### **Main Points of 1 Timothy**

Pauls' first letter to Timothy has been a blessing over the last 6 months as it instructed us in God's desires for our life as individuals and together as a church worshipping Him. God has always been concerned with the order of our lives and the welfare of His people. God from the beginning wanted His people to be marked as belonging to Him in this fallen world, to be set apart as holy, so God appointed to Abraham that His people should be circumcised. Moses wrote in the Pentateuch God's instructions on how to live holy and in proper worship of God. Israel was set apart from the world to be an example of God's people and attract other peoples to God. In the new covenant these principles continue to be taught by God to His people. We are God's church and as such Paul wants to lay out how we should live in holiness. In chapter 3 of 1 Timothy Paul wrote, "I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:14–15 ESV) Paul has had much to say throughout his letter to Timothy about our lives as Christians living in faith and our lives lived in the community of church – "how one ought to behave in the household of God."

Paul presents Christ in his letter to Timothy powerfully. He begins by stating that he was chosen by Christ and set apart to serve Christ's church in chapter 1 saying, "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service." (1 Timothy 1:12) Paul then makes clear that Jesus is the Savior of not only himself and Timothy but people from all walks of life as he wrote, "For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the **Savior of all people**, especially of those who

believe.” (1 Timothy 4:10) God is the God of people from all walks of life who believe in Christ. However, it is necessary for people to believe in the true God and His Son Jesus Christ in order to receive His blessings. There is only one place to learn who God is, that He is the Triune God and that is in His inspired words found in the Bible. It is in His Bible that we come to know Him and who we are as His children.

Paul opens his letter with our need to be able to identify false teachers and their false doctrines in order that we may know the true Word of God. He instructs Timothy to “remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,<sup>4</sup> nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.” (1 Timothy 1:3–4) Satan still continues to work through false teachers to pervert God’s Word in an effort to take peoples hearts away from knowing the true Christ and true worship.

Paul then states the purpose for which the Law was given – to show mankind their sin and their desperate need for a Savior. He says that sound doctrine leads people on the right path and helps them understand Christ and how He changes who they are. Christ’s whole ministry, here on earth, had one primary purpose, that of saving sinners and bringing them into fellowship with God. Paul says his only true purpose is to serve Christ by preaching the gospel and by demonstrating living for Christ. Paul says when others do this Christ will show them mercy and save them from their sins. Paul wrote in chapter 1, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Timothy 1:15) Our salvation is found only in Christ.

Paul instructs Timothy and all Christians that we are called to “wage the good warfare” in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1:18 by holding fast to our faith found in the Scripture. Our

faith is built upon the testimony of God’s Word, Christ’s sacrificial life, death and resurrection, and the changes that come through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul gives instructions of what it means to live out our faith. He begins with the reprogramming of our hearts and minds through communicating with God in prayer. “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people ... that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” (1 Timothy 2:1–2) Paul continues with instructions for living based on the peace of prayer. “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; <sup>9</sup> likewise also that women ... with modesty and self-control ... <sup>10</sup> profess godliness—with good works.” (1 Timothy 2:8–10) As men and women of God, we are to live out our faith in fellowship with one another so that our unity may be a powerful witness of Christ to the world.

Paul affirms the roles of men and women as God designed them. It is God’s design that men and women fulfill their roles differently in this life. Men and women are different in their roles, yet equal as spiritual children of God. One difference is the role of leadership within Christ’s church. In chapter 3 Paul begins with, “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.” (1 Timothy 3:1) He then outlines that the leadership of Christ’s church is to be men that meet a list of qualifications.

In chapter 4 Paul instructs Timothy and those reading this letter on the basis for being a good servant of Jesus Christ. Paul says, “Train yourself for godliness; <sup>8</sup> for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” (1 Timothy 4:7–8) Again godliness is defined in God’s Word and Timothy is instructed to “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.” *Here the “teaching” is the Old Testament and the writings of the Apostles that will become the New Testament.*

“Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Timothy 4:16) We are instructed then to learn the Bible, teach and disciple others in the Word of God without change, just as God inspired it.

A problem that has developed in the church in America is many Christians think that it is only the pastor who is to preach the Word. In the Greek “*Kerasso*” which is translated as “preach” means to proclaim. We are all called to preach the gospel and to demonstrate the true Word of God by how we live, how we influence the next generation and by obedience to disciple others. If you are not taking the time to share the gospel with others then you are not being faithful to the calling God has given to all His children. Paul wrote to all believers in Rome, “How then will they call on him (*Jesus Christ*) in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him (*Jesus Christ*) of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” *Someone? You are someone!*<sup>15</sup> “And how are they to preach unless they are sent?” Each one of you has been sent into the world to live holy before a broken society. You have been sent into the world of work, social relationships of friends, the grocery store and on and on. God has sent you into the world with the express purpose to proclaim the gospel of Christ! Paul finishes, “As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” (Romans 10:14–15) Let me ask you are your feet beautiful? Are you taking Christ everywhere you walk and go? Paul has been writing and focusing on the responsibility of individuals, of you and me as we live, we are to openly live the gospel.

In chapter 5 Paul shifts his focus from individual responsibility to that of the church, the community living out our faith together. We are to live in harmony with each other showing love and kindness. We read in Philippians, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant *or worthy than yourselves.*” (Philippians 2:3) If we each consider others first then no

ones needs, in our church, will go unmet. This is serious charge for Paul wrote in the fifth chapter of his first letter to Timothy, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8) The word “relatives” was a tribal term meaning to care for everyone in your tribe, not just your immediate family or household, even though they are of first priority. As a church, a community of Christ we are of the same tribe, we are relatives. We are to be committed to each other as family and tribe. If a church lives in this manner as the world watches people will desire to become part of the community of Christ and His tribe. Paul instructs that we are to provide for our family, the church’s pastor, those of our church and then beyond. We are to show hospitality towards others, care for our sick and afflicted, give to the poor and as Paul wrote we are to wash the feet of our fellow saints as Christ demonstrated. These are the good works that come from the humble heart of love.

Paul returns to the subject of false teachers in chapter 6, “Teach and urge these things. <sup>3</sup> If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup> he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.” (1 Timothy 6:2–4) Why does Paul feel it is necessary to return to warning about false teachers and false doctrine? Because he knows that it is our sin nature to gravitate towards doctrines that flatter and appeal to our sin nature. Certain themes are repeated throughout the scriptures and the warning of false teachings or doctrine is one of those. God is taking the time to reinforce our need to stay true to His Word and His Word alone. In order to take this warning seriously Paul encourages Timothy and all Christians to “flee these things” in chapter 6 beginning in verse 11. (*Flee what things? Flee false teachers, false teachings and false doctrine.*) Instead we are call to “Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. <sup>12</sup> Fight the good

fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” (1 Timothy 6:11–12) This is one of the reasons I have “quite time” first thing in the morning – before my day in the world starts. It sets my heart and mind on godly pursuits and helps me identify the false. It gives me a holy filter to evaluate the events of my day.

Paul moves on, reminding Christians we are not to worship or love money. Money is to be a tool used for meeting the needs of our family and kingdom work. Out of our love for Christ we “are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,<sup>19</sup> thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.” (1 Timothy 6:18–19) Our lasting reward for having a heart of service to Christ is eternal in heaven. While here on earth we are to give freely and generously to God’s church.

### **Call To Faith**

This brings us to the closing of Paul’s letter to Timothy. He ends as he begun instructing us to hold fast to the Word of God. Reading 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, chapter 6, verses 20 and 21, “O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called ‘knowledge,’<sup>21</sup> for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.” (1 Timothy 6:20–21) Paul calls Timothy and every generation to “guard the deposit entrusted to you.” Guarding the Bible as God’s inspired Word is a challenge in today’s world. Our society has followed Pilate who said to Jesus in John chapter 18, “What is truth?” (John 18:38) We live in a society that believes everyone has their own truth because there is no absolute truth. To this I say there is truth – read the Bible.

The most important duty of a church is to guard the Word of God. Each member of the community is responsible for accurate handling and transmission of the Word.

The Bible must always be handled with reverence and awe and care because it alone is the self-revelation of God. King David wrote, “**You God have exalted above all things your name and your word.**” (Psalm 138:2) What some Christians seem to have failed to grasp is not taking God’s Word seriously as He has revealed it is to fail in taking God seriously. If Christians or the church do not take God seriously in living their lives, well then, why should the world take God seriously? Moses in the Pentateuch commanded Israel and he commands us, “**You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.**” (Deuteronomy 4:2) John then echoes Moses at the end of God’s revelation of Himself, “**I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,**<sup>19</sup> **and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.**” (Revelation 22:18–19) For those who truly believe these commands they should strike their heart with its direr warning and also the knowledge of the promises found in God’s Word. Jude understood and made clear this in writing, “**Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.**” (Jude 3) Jude who appears to be the younger brother of James, who was the younger half-brother of Jesus, continues the fight against false teachers, false teaching and false doctrine into the early second century.

So just as Paul was contenting with false teachers in Ephesus and James who wrote, to “**To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion,**” (James 1:1) meaning the churches that were dispersed throughout Asia Minor and Jude who wrote to the early second century churches concerning false doctrine. Today churches are still tempted to compromise the truth of the Bible in order to make it more appealing to their sinful

nature and to the world. Despite all of the opposition and persecution Paul, James, Jude and the other writers of the New Testament endured and guarded the truth entrusted to them until they joined Christ in heaven. As believers and those who truly follow Christ we are called to do no less.

### **Call To Duty**

We have a duty to fulfill. “O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you.” (1 Timothy 6:20) Paul makes an emotional appeal to Timothy to honor God and be dutifully faithful. Paul makes an emotional appeal to you “guard the deposit entrusted to you.” You, each one of you, God has charged you to guard the Bible He has entrusted to your care. Guard the truth of the Bible not only for your life but also for future generations. Our aim is the same as Paul’s own, as he expressed to the believers in Corinth, “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1) My beloved how are we doing? Are we faithful servants of Christ? Are we guarding the mysteries of God? Every Christian is called to the duty and sacred trust of guarding the Word of God.

### **Call To Holiness**

“O Timothy ... Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called ‘knowledge.’ ” (1 Timothy 6:20) We are to study and know the Bible so well that we are able to identify false doctrine and immediately turn away from it. As Paul wrote in his second letter, “Avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness,<sup>17</sup> and their talk will spread like gangrene.” (2 Timothy 2:16–17) False doctrine are the lies of Satan and are like a contagious illness and when one is exposed it can quickly spread until it has consumed your body and rotted your soul. We inoculate ourselves against the false by the study of God’s true Word. As Paul wrote, “Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what



is dishonorable.” *We cleanse our mind and soul through the study of God’s Word and prayer.* “Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:21)

## **Call To Truth**

“O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called ‘knowledge,’<sup>21</sup> for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.” (1 Timothy 6:20–21) The danger of false teaching is simple; it causes confusion between the truth and the lie. This takes people’s focus away from God’s eternal truth, plants doubt and opens their souls to Satan’s deception. The Apostle Peter said it best, “False prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.<sup>2</sup> And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.” (2 Peter 2:1–2) My beloved, I hope this helps you see the seriousness of guarding the truth entrusted to us by God. It is not only for our salvation but those who are in our lives - family, friends and co-workers. Let me close with Paul’s command to Timothy and all Christians, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15) Alone we are exposed to the enemy, our shield and sword faces front, but who will watch out back? In community we stand with our backs together, facing outward ready to do battle as an army of God! Let us faithfully guard the Word of God for the next generation. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31) Do I hear an Amen!