

## The Minister And The Disciple

### 1 Timothy 1:1-2

#### Introduction

This epistle by Paul to Timothy requires some introduction. Paul wrote the letter to Timothy who was in Ephesus. Many conservative scholars place the writing around 64 A.D. Scholars suggest Paul may have written these instructions either from Rome, or Philippi or somewhere in the region of Macedonia prior to his final arrest and eventual imprisonment in Rome. Paul's purpose in writing the letter was to provide instruction and encouragement to Timothy, a young leader. Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to promote godliness, sound doctrine and to confront the growing group of false leaders who had made their way into the Ephesian church and surrounding congregations. We know Paul hoped to return to visit Timothy in Ephesus (3:14-15;4:13). But thank God Paul wrote this priceless piece of precious instruction for practical godliness and pastoral care.

Some of the key phrases in this letter are “not ashamed” and “suffer hardship”; “endure”, “word”, “charge” and “diligence”. The phrase “charge” is also translated *commandment* (1:3;5,18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13,17). The word charge was a military term which means to pass down the line. The Lord Jesus Christ entrusted Paul with the gospel (1:11) and Paul was now entrusting that same gospel to Timothy. The sacred charge was not simply a passing of the baton of leadership; Timothy is charged with guarding the gospel like a sacred treasure (see 2 Timothy 1:13-14) and imparting that gospel to other faithful people who would in turn entrust it to others (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul will use other military phrases like “occasion” in the sense of base camp or operation headquarters in order to launch gospel outreach (see 2 Timothy 2:3; 3:6).

The theme of the book is summarized in 1 Timothy 3:15; *“but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* How are Christians to act in Christ's Church? This is why I am calling our series “Christian Conduct In Christ's Church”. C-4. Explosive.

What manner of men and women ought we to be? How should we conduct ourselves amongst ourselves? **We might think of this letter as a “how to” book for the young pastor and the church member.** Paul writes (remarkably) that the church—the local church is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground (foundation) of the truth. **The church has greatly fallen out of favor in the popular culture.** People neglect corporate worship; community and disregard authority and abuse privileges. Paul will address such diverse issues as false teachers and false doctrine and emphasize **sound doctrine** (see 1:3-11; 4:1-10 and 6:11-21). Paul will address the topics of public worship (2:1-15). Since the Church is a place that promotes worship and the necessity and centrality of prayer (see 2:1-4) we must ask and answer the question whether or not our church is in fact a place of worship and prayer. Paul will address the conduct of women (evidently some women were disrupting the service). With all these issues Paul's goal is unity and Paul takes seriously the destructive damage done by division. Paul reminds Timothy that sincere devotion to the Lord trumps tradition and even social interactions. Paul's other concerns include **church leadership** (see 3:1-16); and what it means to be a **caring church** (see chapter 5:1-20; 6:1-2;17-19).

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In short Paul will address the discipline of sound doctrine (chapter 1); the discipline of prayer and public worship (chapter 2); the discipline of church government (chapter 3) and the discipline of the local pastor (chapters 4-6). Paul wants to encourage Timothy in his God-given ministry; to warn against false teachers and false doctrine; to remind Timothy of what constitutes the qualifications for leaders and leadership and how we ought to behave in our church. Paul loved the church at Ephesus. Paul had literally poured his heart into this most famous church. And like Paul I have poured my very life's blood into this church. Your church. I love this church.

### **The Minister's Call And Credentials (v.1)**

*1 Timothy 1:1 (NKJV) I Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,*

In our culture when we write a letter we sign our names at the end. All that changed with E-Mail. Paul identifies himself as “*an apostle of Jesus Christ*”. The word *apostle* means one who is sent by another or the one who is sent. The apostle is therefore one who in part represents another; sent by another and in this case sent by Jesus Christ. We should briefly note that the one sent—belongs to the sender; commissioned by the sender; and possesses the ability and authority (and to a certain extent) the power of the sender.

What is Paul's claim? He is an apostle by the command of God. The word command (*epitagen*) means one under orders—or to place in a position of obligation! In the military a superior officer may say to a subordinate; “soldier you have your orders”. The word command carries with it the idea of obligation, compulsion, force, necessity (see *The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible; 1Thessalonians-Philemon p. 125*).

How does Paul come by this title? Paul claims his calling and authority comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. Why does Paul announce what Timothy already knows? The stress on Paul's apostolic authority is meant in part to provide Timothy with the permission to share the content of the letter to the whole congregation of believers. The whole church is invited to listen and respond to Paul's instructions. Critics argue; “What gives Paul the right to make blanket doctrinal statements about the roles of leaders, believers and believers who are women?” That's a fair question. Paul's answer includes the fact that he is sent by God with the commandment (orders) of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul calls God ‘our Savior’ and Jesus ‘our hope’. Clearly ‘Savior’ is a title of God. God is the first source of salvation. Salvation is impossible apart from the God of the Bible. Jesus tells us “God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). If God did not love us we would not be saved. We are a people condemned by sin. We need a Savior. We have rebelled against God and have been sentenced to death by our sin. We are now subject to God's wrath, punishment, judgment. God sent Jesus into the world to be our hope. Paul is driven by

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God to present Jesus to this broken world. We are broken by sin. Paul must preach the glorious message of salvation and hope. Mary when she learns that she will carry the Messiah exclaims; “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior” (Luke 1:47). Later Paul writes; “*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and come into the knowledge of the truth, For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time*” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

The minister’s credentials must include a calling by God; and then a message that God is the source of salvation and Jesus is God’s instrument of hope. What is it exactly that human beings hope for? Some think it is recognition, or security or acceptance or esteem or victory over trials. But what of the person who dares hope for forgiveness of sins or deliverance from death or the possibility of knowing and loving God? What of the person who hopes for eternal life? The very fact that a person hopes—implies the need for something that they do not inherently possess! The lost world longs for Jesus! Jesus is our hope! Paul told the Colossians (1:27); “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” In the early church Jesus carried many titles—including Christ Our Hope. William Barclay writes; “Ignatius of Antioch, when he was on his way to execution in Rome, writes to the Church in Ephesus: “Be of good cheer in God the Father and in Jesus Christ our common hope” (*Ignatius; To the Ephesians 21:2*). Polykarp writes: ‘*Let us therefore persevere in our hope and the earnest of our righteousness, who is in Jesus Christ*’ (*Epistle of Polycarp 8*)” (*The Letters to Timothy, Titus & Philemon. Daily Bible Study p. 22*)”.

### The Disciple’s Privilege (v.2a)

*2To Timothy: a true son in the faith:*

Paul writes to Timothy but clearly intends his letter to be heard or read by the believer’s in Ephesus and the community of the saints in the whole region. Paul did not simply anoint or appoint Timothy a bishop or overseer or pastor over the church in Ephesus but entrusts Timothy to serve as Paul’s representative in the region. How do we know that? Because in this letter Paul instructs Timothy on the order of public worship, the appointment of church officers (bishops and deacons); guidance in the disciplines of public and corporate prayer; the place of women in the church. Paul commands Timothy to confront apostasy in the church by teaching **sound doctrine and practicing personal holiness**. Paul’s instructions include how to maintain good relations with local congregations; how to exercise compassion and sympathy to widows and the relations between slaves and masters.

What do we know about Timothy? He was born in Lystra—a Roman colony (B.C. 6) that was later incorporated into the Roman Province known as Galatia. Paul visited this place in 48 A.D. and 51 A.D. This was during Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13) and then again on Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 15). Timothy’s mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were

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devout Jews who came to faith in the Lord Jesus (see Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5). It would seem that Timothy's father was Greek and we have no evidence that he was either a proselyte to Judaism or convert to Christianity since Timothy remained uncircumcised (Acts 16:3) as a young child. Paul will circumcise Timothy in order to avoid unnecessary problems with local Jewish leaders and ordains Timothy at that time. What was Timothy's relationship like with his biological father? It is a mystery. Was Timothy's father a pagan? Abusive? Acts 16:3; "Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek".

Think for a moment. Before Timothy began his travels with Paul—he submits to the painful act of circumcision! Paul feels this necessary to make ministry easier among the Jews! Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15) and was apparently very open to the gospel when Paul first came to Lystra to preach (Acts 14:6-7). Timothy must have demonstrated exceptional faith and growth because Paul chose him to become his partner in the work of the ministry and the spread of the gospel on Paul's second missionary journey (see Acts 16:1-3).

Since Timothy's father was Greek and mother Jewish Timothy must have been keenly aware of all the prejudice and problems associated with growing up in a divided household.

Paul calls him "*a true son in the faith*". The word 'son' is a tender word that was usually reserved for flesh and blood relatives. Timothy shares Paul's philosophy of ministry and views on doctrinal essentials. Timothy left Lystra to travel with Paul. It was at that time that Paul and Timothy established and strengthened churches in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 16:1-17:14). Paul left Berea early to go to Athens and left both Timothy and Silas behind. Paul sent word for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible (Acts 17:13-15). Timothy joins Paul in Athens and then is sent to Thessaloniki to encourage the believers (1 Thessalonians 3:1-2). Later Timothy rejoins Paul in Corinth and helps Paul with the Church in Corinth (Acts 18:5). The Bible doesn't say that Timothy travels with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus and then to Caesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch and back to Ephesus (Acts 18-19:1). But we are told that Timothy worked with Paul in Ephesus. Again the book of Acts makes no mention of Timothy during Paul's trip to Jerusalem, Paul's arrest, two year imprisonment in Caesarea and voyage to Rome (Acts 21:1-28:16). We know that either Timothy was with Paul at that time—or he rejoined Paul at Rome during the early months of Paul's Roman imprisonment. **How do we know?** We read about it in Philippians 1:1; 2:19; Colossians 1:1 and Philemon 1. During the first imprisonment in Rome Paul planned to send Timothy to Philippi but whether or not those plans came fruition we do not know. After Paul's release from prison Timothy travelled with Paul to Ephesus where he left him to represent Paul and to care for the needs of the ministry in that region. **Later Paul will ask Timothy to visit him in prison during Paul's second imprisonment in Rome but there is no evidence that Timothy actually makes it back prior to Paul's execution (67A.D?).** We know the Emperor Nero commits suicide in June 68 A.D. (Paul is executed sometime prior to the death of Nero).

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You should also be aware that the writer of Hebrews mentions Timothy at the end of that letter: “I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released (prison?). If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you” (Hebrews 13:23 NIV).

Paul and Timothy share a unique ministry bond.

### The Disciple’s Provisions (v.2b)

2b “Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Paul reminds Timothy of the grace, mercy and peace provided by our Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. Much could be said. But let me offer at least a few insights into our spiritual reserves. **The minister and the disciple must be in possession of grace and mercy and peace.** What does Paul mean when he uses these three majestic words? Whatever else it means the Father and the Son are the source that makes grace and mercy and peace possible.

### Grace

Paul’s standard greeting in most of his writings include grace and peace. Grace always precedes peace and makes peace possible. Grace has been called God’s unmerited favor. It is that and more. John Stott wrote; “Grace is love that cares and stoops and rescues.” Charles Finney suggests “A state of mind that sees God in everything is evidence of growth in grace and a thankful heart.” Donald Swann; “The grace of God is in my mind shaped like a key, that comes from time to time and unlocks heavy doors.” We are transferred from death to life by grace (see John 5:24). The Gospel itself is called the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24)—because it proclaims God’s favor on the undeserving. The Bible teaches that the grace that is in Jesus is saving grace (Ephesians 2:5); sufficient grace (‘My grace is sufficient for you’ 2 Corinthians 12:9); serving grace—“Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably” (Hebrews 12:28). The grace that is in Christ Jesus is also a supplying grace; “of His fullness we have received, and *grace for grace*” (John 1:16). We cannot exhaust grace; we are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5); justified by grace; “justified freely by His grace (Romans 3:24); elected by His grace; “*A remnant according to the election of grace*” (Romans 11:5); we labor in grace (1 Corinthians 15:10) and we grow in grace (2 Peter 3:18).

### Mercy

The word mercy (*eleos*) was used by the ancients to describe the waves of feelings of pity and sympathy and compassion and affection and kindness. Mercy is the desire to provide comfort—it is the virtue that sees need and then is willing to meet that need. There are two essential elements to the concept of mercy; the ability to see a need and then the ability to meet that need.

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When the word is used as an attribute or character trait of God and Jesus Christ it means God's ability to see all need and meet all need according to exhaustible resources. God sees our need and feels for us (Ephesians 2:1-3) and then acts for us—He has mercy on us! In what sense? The Lord God for a moment withholds justice and judgement! In what sense? He provides a way for us to be saved! Mercy dwells in the heart of love and then is made manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus dies for our sin. He takes our sin on Himself. He takes our judgment on Himself. He not only takes our sin upon Himself He imparts His righteousness to us! **That which was unacceptable becomes acceptable. The object of wrath becomes the object of mercy.** St. John Chrysostom wrote; "Mercy imitates God and disappoints Satan." St. Augustus wrote; "Two works of mercy set a man free; forgive and you will be forgiven, and give and you will receive."

Mercy is both an Old Testament word and a New Testament word. In the Old Testament it speaks of God's lovingkindness; protection and guidance. In the New Testament we might think of this as God acting out! Mercy is compassion in action! Grace and mercy and peace are the minister's tools; the disciples tools to build Christ's church and God's kingdom. These are the tools that Timothy needs to carry on the tasks that are contained in Paul's instructions.

The minister of God and the child of God have experienced the grace of God and the mercy of God. **A person who has never known the grace of God or the mercy of God does not know God and therefore cannot shepherd God's people. Have you experienced the grace of God? Have you experienced the mercy of God?**

### **Peace**

Grace and mercy and peace are the trio of God's blessings! Grace is love planning to bless; mercy is love active in blessing—and peace is love enjoyed! According to the gospel if we have experienced the grace of God and the mercy of God we are free to walk in peace with God. It is a purchased peace. We cannot earn it or deserve it or trade for it. We cannot demand it. The purchase price for peace is blood. The blood of Jesus shed for us (Colossians 1:20). It is embodied peace (He is our peace). Peace is not something that simply comes from Christ it is Christ. It is abiding peace "My peace I give you" (John 14:27) not as the world gives. It is not temporary or arbitrary. It is a complete peace. Perfect in nature—perfect in the way it is kept or keeping (Isaiah 26:3)—"you will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on Thee, Because he trusts Thee." This is the peace that encourages, ennobles—Jesus says to the woman who anoints Jesus from a flask of fragrant oil—a woman who is clearly a sinner; "Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself saying; "This man, if He were a prophet, would know what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39); but Jesus says, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." Does that peace rule in your heart? Peace has its origin in Heaven. God is not the author of confusion but peace. Peace is the product of the Cross "so he made peace by the Cross" (Ephesians 2:15-16).

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#### **Conclusion**

What is Paul's vision for the church? Paul will call upon Timothy to preach sound doctrine (1:1-11); to preach the glorious gospel (1:12-17); and defend the faith (1:18-20). Later in this epistle Paul will give instructions about prayer and modesty; about leadership and what it means to be a good minister, a godly minister and growing minister. Paul will lay out instructions for the seasoned saints; for widows, for leaders, for servants and slaves—to peace makers and trouble makers; to the rich and the educated. There will be something for everyone.

There will be something for you.