

# 1 Timothy

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## **OVERVIEW - 1 TIMOTHY 1:1 - 11**

Paul's relationship with Timothy is outlined in Philippians 2:20-22, and is one of deep gospel partnership and friendship. Timothy's recruitment to join the apostolic ministry is referenced in Acts 16:1-3.

The summary of the mission Timothy is charged with is explained in 1 Tim 1:15 as Christ coming into the world to save sinners. The gospel is committed to the apostles (Matt 28:18-20) who have the unique authority to record it and ensure that it will be proclaimed to all nations until the end of the age. We are all set apart to pass it on from generation to generation as we share in the apostolic mission. Paul saw himself in particular as the apostle to the Gentiles (or nations) and so we witness the expansive nature of his mission in his New Testament letters.

In these opening verses we witness Paul giving instructions to his protégé Timothy about ensuring a church is on about advancing the work of the Kingdom.

### **Paul's Greeting | w 1-2**

Paul begins his letter outlining his authority as an apostle through the Damascus road event (see 1 Tim 1:13). His greeting to Timothy emphasises the loyalty of their gospel partnership and Paul's appointing of him as a pastor of the church who will ensure that sound doctrine will be the cornerstone of those who will lead in the church. The blessings of grace, mercy and peace speak to the work of Christ on the cross and the assurance this brings to Timothy's ministry. This is reinforced by Paul's twice reference to God as Saviour and Father, and Jesus Christ as our hope and Lord, underlining both the person and work of the Trinity that are essential to understanding gospel ministry. God's plan of salvation enables us to come to know him as Father. The hope of Jesus is his coming return and we live under his Lordship until that day.

### **Paul's Charge | w 3-7**

Having outlined the foundation for their gospel partnership Paul gives Timothy a charge. He is to ensure would-be teachers in the church do not wander from the sound doctrine of the gospel and engage in meaningless speculation. Timothy's motive is to be love that issues from a genuine gospel faith. This love desires that teachers recoil from false and vain teaching that lacks understanding and affirms ignorance.

Paul will explain the content of the gospel as he continues his instructions to Timothy. Jesus Christ comes in to the world to save sinners (1:15) and grants the gift of eternal life (1:16). All this was achieved through Christ's incarnation and resultant ascension (6:16) after his earthly ministry reached a climax in his death and resurrection. The gospel is described as a mystery, not in the sense that it is confusing, but rather it is a revelation now revealed in the fulfilment of the covenantal promises now made known in Christ. The gospel is received and believed by confession (6:12-13) and becomes a trust that we are committed to guard as a trust to ensure it is passed on to future generations as we take hold of life that is truly life (1:19)

### **Paul's Gospel | w 8-11**

Paul explains the place of the law in relation to the gospel. From the list of behaviours he condemns we assume these teachers were teaching a form of the Mosaic law, but instead brought its judgment upon those in the church by their behaviour. The only common territory between Paul and the would-be teacher is that they both agreed that the law was good. However, the apostle makes it clear it is good only when it is used rightly. The righteous will recognise that it is not a means for salvation and therefore cannot exist for this purpose. The unrighteous will manipulate it to justify their ungodly living, about which Paul gives an extensive description, largely connecting their habits to breaches of Old Testament law. This and any other behaviour is that which contradicts the sound teaching of the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which Paul was entrusted.

## **GETTING STARTED**

1. What do you think should be the top three concerns of a gospel-centred church?

## **INTO THE TEXT**

### *Read 1 Timothy 1:1-11*

2. What does it mean to be an apostle, and in what sense is Paul's command in v 1 unique to him? (see v 12; Acts 9:15; Romans 1:1)
3. What was the nature of Paul's relationship to Timothy? (see Philippians 2:20-22).
4. Why is Timothy called to remain in Ephesus?
5. What is the content of the sound doctrine Timothy is to pass on? (see 1 Tim 1:15-16; 3:15-16; 4:9-10; 2 Tim 1:6-11)
6. Explain the methodology of false teachers in the church. What is the impact on their listeners?
7. What is the law Paul is speaking of in v 8, and what makes it good?
8. What is the law's purpose in the church that Timothy is to lead?
9. In what way is the gospel a trust?

## **TAKEAWAY**

10. From Paul's opening words to Timothy, what are the signs of an unhealthy church? How might you set about addressing this if you were a leader in the church?
11. Do you think false teaching is easy or hard to identify?