

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Lecture 26, 1 & 2 Timothy

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson teaching New Testament History and Literature, lecture 26 on 1 and 2 Timothy.

All right, let's go ahead and get started.

Last class period we started to look at the final section of Paul's letters known as the pastoral epistles, although that may not be the best label for them, but it's one that is commonly used, so I'll stick with it, although there are probably better ways to describe the 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus, the final three letters that we'll look at. And one of the things we want to talk about is how those fit within the temporal framework of Paul's life. For example, how do they fit into the book of Acts, especially 2 Timothy, which is the last letter most likely that Paul wrote right before his pending execution in 2 Timothy?

But we ended last class period by looking at one of the texts in 1 Corinthians, I'm sorry, 1 Timothy in chapter 2, and asking how our ability to reconstruct the background of 1st Timothy as far as what was going on and what are some of the factors that contributed to the production and writing of the letter, how that might affect the way we read one text in particular. We begin by looking at the first, kind of towards the end of chapter 2, Paul's instructions to women as far as how they dress, not to adorn themselves in pearls and gold and braided hair, and then his command for them to be silent and not to teach or have authority over men. And the question we are wrestling with or started to raise is how we read that today.

Is that section binding for today or are these instructions, were they meant only for Paul's first-century church? And so, we'll look at that very briefly. As I said, not necessarily because I want to solve that issue or tell you what you should think about it, but just to demonstrate hermeneutically how we approach a text of Scripture, the factors that we have to consider when we think about how we read this for today, how do we apply it, and also how understanding the background of a text may help us to read a section of the New Testament in a slightly different way. So, we'll look at chapter 2 of 1 Timothy, also chapter 3, the section on elders and deacons, and then move on to 2 Timothy and Titus, which we'll move through those texts rather quickly.

And then I want to try to summarize what do we learn about Paul from his teaching. What seem to be the dominant threads and the dominant theological themes that we find throughout Paul's letters?

All right, let's open with prayer. Father, we thank you again for the privilege as well as at the same time recognizing the responsibility we have of reading and encountering your revelation to us in the form of the New Testament. Lord, I pray that we'll be attentive to not only what the text meant and how it would have been heard and understood in its first-century setting, but having understood and grasped that, that we'd be better able to respond to it in the 21st century. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

All right, as I said, we began to look at the text in 2 Timothy 2, and particularly Paul's instructions to women not to dress ostentatiously with pearls and gold and braided hair, and also the instructions to be silent and they're not permitted to teach or have authority over men. And one thing, two things we highlighted before we look just a little bit more specifically about ways to read this.

First of all, I emphasize that most likely Paul's instructions come out, they do come out of a very specific situation. We talked a little bit about the concept of the new Roman woman in the first century and even a little bit before the concept of the new Roman woman, which may have affected the way women were acting in this particular text. So, Paul's instructions are probably not just off the cuff that he just decided to say this for no reason, but probably they're in response to a problem that the false teaching and perhaps this idea of the new Roman woman has now caused in the church.

That brings up the second issue we said that chapter 2 primarily addresses the situation of the church as it gathers for worship. It's not necessarily addressing what goes on in the home or what goes on in the workplace or what goes on in one's private life, although not that Paul's not interested in those things, it's just that when we read chapter 2 of 1 Timothy, we must put it in its proper setting and context, and that is Paul is addressing what goes on when the church gathers for worship. Now, how do we read this text? Basically, there are two ways.

One can read this text as being universally binding, that is these instructions that Paul gives to the women in the church, especially to not teach or have authority over men, those could be interpreted as universally binding. That is Paul assumes that these instructions would apply to any church at any time, not only in the Ephesian church that he is now addressing. So even though this may be the result of a specific problem, those that would hold this view would say, no, these instructions are universally binding.

They are instructions that Paul would have given to any church. He just happens to give them to the Ephesians because of the issue in the church. One of the things they would emphasize is that in chapter 2 and verse 14, actually verses 13 and 14, Paul seems to ground his instructions in creation.

When he says, for Adam was formed first and then Eve, Paul interestingly seems to ground his instructions then in creation, that is the fact that Adam was created first and then Eve. And the suggestion then is that God has designed the roles that one finds in chapter 2 of male leadership is based on creation, the way things are created. So, they would emphasize by grounding his instructions in creation, this is the way God has created the roles of male and female, that now Paul is saying this should always be observed in the church.

And so those that would see that more emphasis on these instructions are universally binding, that Paul expects them to be obeyed in all churches, in all settings, in the first century or the 21st century, would draw attention to the fact that Paul seems to ground his instructions in creation, in a theology of the created order. So that's one way to take them. But there are variations within that.

Not all who would hold to these instructions being universally binding would see them as binding in the same way. The second approach then would be to see these instructions as Paul's instructions only to address this specific problem in the church of Ephesus. So, in other words, Paul would not necessarily have given these instructions to any other church.

It's just that there's a particular problem in Ephesus and now he is trying to curb that problem or cut that problem off. And so, these instructions are only meant for this specific situation. Outside of this situation, where this situation doesn't hold, then Paul did not expect these instructions to be universally binding.

So, depending on whether you think Paul is emphasizing perhaps the creation order and grounding his instructions in the creation order so that you would see these instructions as universally binding, or whether you see the text as more, you focus more on the specific setting and the specific problem and background that would cause you to limit these instructions only to the first-century church, will determine how you read the text. Now even the second one, even if you think that Paul is not, even if you think that these instructions are only for the first-century church and Paul did not think they were universally binding, doesn't mean they're not still applicable in some way. You would simply apply the text in a very different way than you would if you thought the instructions were universally binding.

I mean, either way, it's still God's word for the church and they still need to be applied. But how you apply them will depend on, again, whether you think the instructions are meant to be binding and they're for all times, it's a universally valid principle, or whether you see the instructions as mainly limited to the first-century context that Paul was addressing. If you're interested in pursuing this more, I've mentioned this series of books a couple of times.

The series is called the Counterpoint Series by Zondervan Publishing Company, as I've said before, they have a whole series of books on four views of this, and two views of that. They have a book on two views of women in ministry, where you have two individuals arguing that these instructions are universal, although they come to a little bit different conclusions. You have two other individuals arguing that they are not universally binding.

And by the way, this is not a male and female issue. I have plenty of males argue that this is not universal. I've read a number of arguments by women arguing that these instructions are binding and universal.

So, it's not so much a male or female issue as far as which side you come down on. So, if you're interested in pursuing it, I would direct you to the Zondervan Publishing Series, Counterpoint Series, and the book *Two Views of Women in Ministry*. Chapter 3, another example, much like Chapter 2, how we read Chapter 2 can depend on the background that we construct, and the problem that Paul is addressing.

Chapter 3 is similar in that this goes back to our discussion of the pastoral epistles, especially 1 Timothy in general, and how one understands the overarching purpose of it. If one sees 1 Timothy as primarily a kind of a church manual, we talked about the church manual view or the instructional manual view of 1 Timothy, which primarily sees 1 Timothy as addressing Timothy on how to run the church, how to organize the church, what the church should be doing. However, I suggested to you that most likely that's not what Paul is doing, that rather Paul is addressing, as he tells us in the first three or four verses of 1 Timothy 1, he clearly tells us that he is addressing a very specific problem, and that is, as with a couple of other letters he's already written, some type of false teaching or deviant teaching has now infiltrated the church in Ephesus, so he writes to Timothy to enable Timothy to deal with it.

So, I would not expect that Paul is going to tell us everything that he would if he were constructing some church manual. Instead, he's only going to instruct Timothy with what is necessary to address this problem, this teaching, whatever precisely it is. And so, how does that affect the way we read chapter three? Chapter three is devoted to the church's selection of individuals to fulfill two different roles, that is, elders and deacons.

And so, first of all, Paul addresses the issue of elders and tells his readers that it's a worthy and noble task to be an elder, but here are the qualifications, and he lists several qualifications that an elder must fulfill in order to be chosen to function as an elder in the church, and then he goes on and does the same thing for deacons. Now, once again, when we think about this text in light of its setting, is Paul trying to give us instructions on what is required of elders and how to choose them, or is Paul more interested in instructing Timothy on how to combat and deal with this false teaching? If it's the latter, then I would not expect that Timothy, or Paul, will tell us

everything there is to know about what elders and deacons are and what they're supposed to do and how to choose them, etc., etc. And that's exactly what you find.

Interestingly, when you read 1 Timothy 3, you find precious little about what elders and deacons actually did in the first-century church. You find everything about their character, and especially an emphasis on their ability to teach. Why is that? My summary of 1 Timothy 3 is, that the reason Paul addresses this issue is because perhaps the best chance for the church to combat this false teaching is if they have leaders that are qualified, especially able to teach sound doctrine.

That will be the best way for the church to be able to combat the false teaching. So, Paul says, again, Paul says virtually nothing about what elders and deacons do. From the words elders and deacons itself, and a little bit of the description, you do get a sense that the primary function of the elders is the primary oversight of the church, particularly teaching, whereas the deacons, it's a lot less clear.

Are they some subordinate group under the elders? It doesn't seem so, but Paul doesn't tell us. The idea of a deacon is more of a servant, but does that mean that they only perform physical tasks? I grew up in a church situation where the elders were in charge of the spiritual leadership of the church and the deacons for the physical upkeep. That's fine, but that's not necessarily found in 1 Timothy.

Again, that's because Paul is not telling us about what deacons and elders do. He assumes that the church knew what they did. He's mainly concerned that the church in Ephesus has the kind of elders and deacons that will allow them to withstand this false teaching.

So, he lists these qualifications because that kind of leadership will best be able to resist the false teaching that it faces. He doesn't tell us about how to choose them. He doesn't tell us about how many elders and deacons there should be or if they should be on a rotating basis and whether they should be on for three years.

All of that is fine. It's just that, again, Paul is silent on much of what elders and deacons do precisely and how they would have functioned in the church. Again, if you read 1 Timothy carefully, it is clear that the elders did have the primary function that probably we would associate with a senior pastor in our church today of the primary oversight, care, and teaching responsibility within the church.

But again, outside of that, he doesn't say a lot about exactly what they do. So, there's probably some wiggle room in our denominations today as far as exactly what elders and deacons do and how they at times function. So, does everyone see that? I think it makes a big difference how we read when we understand the background, and how we read a text like that.

Some have even suggested that this deviant teaching whatever it was had already affected some of the church leadership or some of those who were propagating this deviant false teaching had actually infiltrated or become leaders in the church and now by giving these lists of qualifications, this would be Paul's way of weeding them out and making sure that they did not get into leadership. That's possible as well. But again, when you read the text, we need to be aware of as much of what Paul doesn't say because he's not just talking about, he's not asking the question here's what elders and deacons do and how they function and here's who should be elders and deacons and here's the criteria for choosing them and here's how long they should serve, etc., etc.

He's asking one question, how can the church stand against the false teaching by making sure that they have leaders that are qualified that will best be able to withstand it? So again, in conclusion, 1 Timothy then is not meant to be a manual for how to run the church, not that we can't learn something about how the church should be organized or function or what should take place, what the church should do, but Paul's not primarily answering that question though we could wish he did. But again, Paul's main concern as it was in Colossians, as it was in Galatians, is to address a teaching that he sees now is a threat to the church, this time the church in Ephesus.

And now he writes a letter to Timothy who is now to take it to the Ephesian church. Again, Timothy is the person Paul has most likely appointed to take care of this situation, this problem in the church. Now Paul writes a letter for the primary purpose of enabling Timothy and the Ephesian church to deal with this teaching that is in danger of affecting the church.

And it seems to me all the instructions can be seen as kind of reaching that end of enabling the church to deal with the teaching. And a number of, each of the chapters perhaps reflect problems that have arisen because of this teaching affecting the church. All right, good.

Any questions on 1 Timothy? Again, I didn't want to linger too long on 1 Timothy, but we looked at a couple of passages in just a slight bit of detail again to show you what's entailed in interpreting a text in light of the broader context that may have influenced it. And we saw that with 1 Corinthians, often your ability to reconstruct what most likely was the issue being addressed can have a profound effect on how you read certain sections of the New Testament. Alright, well, let's reach into the early church's mailbox and pull out another letter and we'll look at another letter to Timothy, and this is the second letter to Timothy.

And as we said, as you read it, the thing that becomes ultimately clear is this is Paul's very last letter. Paul is very clear that he is now facing execution and his death is very close. So, for example, in 2 Timothy, particularly chapter 4 and verse 6, he says, As

for me, I am already being poured out as a libation or drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. So, Paul clearly thinks that he's at the end.

And we'll look at what does that mean about the way we read 2 Timothy. First of all, again, why did Paul write? As I just summarized, Paul is now coming to the end of his life. He is imprisoned in Rome and about to be executed.

And basically, what he does now, is he writes to pass the torch, we might say, he passed the torch on to Timothy. He wants to ensure that the Pauline legacy and the Pauline gospel continue. This gospel that we have focused on in books like Romans and Galatians, etc.

Now Paul wants to ensure that that will get passed on. And so, he writes to Timothy in the wake of his own execution and upcoming death. Now he writes to Timothy to carry on the tradition and kind of passes on the torch to him.

The letter of 2 Timothy also, in some respects, resembles a fairly common type of writing just before, during, and slightly after the first century, known as a testament, kind of a last will and testament. And we have, again, you can read English translations of these. A testament in the ancient world was a writing that was the last words of a dying hero.

And someone famous who was generally on their deathbed, it would be their parting instructions to their disciples or to their family or children to often ethical instructions but also at times eschatological type instructions as far as what was going to take place in the future. Almost the kind of thing we at times read in the book of Revelation or something like that. But 2 Timothy very closely resembles that kind of literature.

In one sense could be understood as a testament in epistolary or in letter form. So, this is sort of Paul's last will and testament. It's the last words of a dying hero.

Except Paul's not on his deathbed, he's on the execution block or his life is about to be taken because of his witness for Jesus Christ. But again, the key is those verses I just read starting in chapter 4 verse 6. Again, as for me, I am already being poured out as a libation and the time for my departure has come. So, testamentary writings clearly anticipated the departure and the death of the hero.

But then would again pass on the parting and the final instruction to those who were gathered around. In this case, it's Timothy who receives the final and parting instruction of Paul. So, 2 Timothy could be seen as Paul's last will and testament.

The parting words of a dying hero. If I were then, in light of that situation and background and purpose, if I were to pick a theme for 2 Timothy, it would be that Paul is instructing Timothy to contend for the faith. The faith, the gospel that he now passes on to Timothy, the torch that he now passes on, he calls for Timothy to contend for that and to fight for that.

And uses a variety of metaphors in the gospel to get Timothy to preserve that gospel in both his life and his teaching as Paul is about to depart from the scene. And that's all I want to say about 2 Timothy. Again, just to give you a flavor of why it was written and what is going on.

What about the last one? The book of Titus, is the shortest of the three. Again, Paul's letters are arranged largely in order of length. So, Titus is not the last letter that was written.

And Philemon certainly wasn't. But because of their length, they occur towards the end of the collection of Paul's letters. But Titus is an interesting book.

And when you read Titus, the first thing you realize is many of the similarities with 1 Timothy. Which is why I just want to breeze through Titus quickly. But there are a couple of distinctive things about the book that I do want to focus on when it comes to Titus.

So, first of all, what is Titus' role? Again, like 1 and 2 Timothy, the book of Titus is named not after the church, but after the individual to which it was written. These pastoral epistles are quite interesting in that they may reflect a different strategy on Paul's part. Remember, most of the other books we saw, within the prescript, the introduction of the epistle, were addressed to specific churches, a specific church or churches, except for perhaps Ephesians, which is probably addressed to Christians and churches more generally in Asia Minor and the Greco-Roman Empire.

But most of Paul's letters are addressed to churches by name. But it's interesting that with 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, Paul does not address a specific church, but addresses a person, Timothy or Titus, who is responsible for that church and responsible for communicating that information to the church. The other exception was obviously Philemon, but Paul is much more interested in a rather specific problem between the relationship of Philemon and Onesimus, though it was meant to be heard by the broader church.

But it's kind of interesting, Paul seems to be following a different strategy here. Rather than just addressing the church directly, he now addresses a particular person that he has appointed over that church, and that person then is responsible for conveying the instructions and the content to the church. And the same is true with Titus.

Titus then, much like Timothy, was probably left by Paul with the church in Crete to deal with a very similar situation. That is, whatever the nature of the false or deviant teaching that Paul was addressing in 1 Timothy, something similar may have been going on in Titus. But again, when you read Titus, clearly Paul is addressing a problem or an issue that the church is facing, and now he's left Titus there to deal with it, and now he writes a letter of instruction as to how Titus is to deal with this problem of false teaching that has infiltrated the church, which is on the island of Crete.

Now, everyone knows where Crete is. Let me jump ahead here for just a moment. You've seen this map again. This is the island of Crete, right here.

And again, you see on one of his final journeys to Rome which ends Acts 28, you see that Paul visited the island of Crete, but this is Crete where a church had been established, and now Paul has sent Titus to the island of Crete to deal with the situation. Again, some false teaching is infecting the church, and now Paul writes to Titus to help him deal with it. The other thing too is, most likely, I wanted to say something more about this with 2 Timothy, but most likely, 1 and 2 Timothy, at least, and perhaps Titus, were written probably sometime after the events of Acts 28.

Acts chapter 28 ends with Paul in Rome and says nothing else, and that was probably Luke's literary strategy. Remember, Luke was trying to demonstrate how the gospel began in fulfillment of Isaiah's promise of restoration and the spread of the gospel and the people of God to lesser and lesser Jewish territories. In Acts chapter 1, verse 8, Luke envisioned that the gospel would eventually reach, in fulfillment of Isaiah, would eventually reach the ends of the earth.

So, in Acts chapter 28, once the gospel gets to Rome, Luke ends his narrative. But most likely, the imprisonment that Paul is suffering under in 2 Timothy, the imprisonment that is going to lead to his death, is a different one than the one that we read about in Acts chapter 28. Again, this is based on the book of Acts.

So, Acts ends with this journey, with this red line, that Paul ends up in Rome, and that's where it ends. But most likely, Paul would have been released from prison sometime after the events of Acts chapter 28 and would have been involved in another activity. Probably then, he would have written 1 Timothy and Titus and then would have ended up in prison again for the last time, and then he would have written the book of 2 Timothy.

Now, there have been other suggestions as to how 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus fit into Acts, but that's one of the most widely accepted ones, at least for Christian scholars and students of the New Testament. So that's where the island of Crete is. A subversive letter.

Interestingly, one of the interesting things about Titus is it appears at times to subvert a number of ideas, beliefs, traditions, or part of the reputation of the island of Crete. For example, the island of Crete actually became proverbial, almost proverbial for and well-known for immorality and for kind of fast and loose living. Some have described it as a modern-day or would have been a first-century Las Vegas or something like that.

That's where people went to live wildly and do whatever. Crete was also, a lot of literature we have, Crete seemed to be synonymous with someone who lied and told lies. Crete was, interestingly, one of the fabled, or as tradition has it, was the birthplace and the burial place of the god Zeus.

You'd wonder why they'd have a tradition where the god Zeus was buried in Crete. But Crete was not known for telling the truth. In fact, a phrase you often find in commentaries quoting is, All Cretans are liars.

It was a phrase that some have used to summarize what Crete was known for. So, interestingly, note what we read in Titus. Notice how Titus opens his letter.

He says, Now, Paul hasn't said that elsewhere, so you wonder if, perhaps, Paul is emphasizing that as a direct contrast and parody with Crete. Crete is known for lying, and now Paul says, so that's what I mean. You find other instances of that throughout Titus, where Paul apparently subverts typical cultural values or lifestyle things that Crete is known for in antiquity.

Or another one in chapter 2. In chapter 2:11 through 14, Paul says of Titus, So, again, you wonder if some of that language is not meant to be subversive of the kind of lifestyle that those in Crete would have lived. And, instead, Paul proposes something more subversive and a lifestyle that is radical in comparison to what would have been typical in Cretan culture. So, there are other examples of that throughout Titus, where Paul may, again, be writing a subversive type of letter, subverting and undermining typical Cretan values or Cretan mythology or Cretan teachings and lifestyle choices and things like that.

So then, what is the purpose? What, then, overall is the purpose of Titus? Paul seems to write Titus, again, to instruct Titus. Again, Titus is the individual. Just as he left Timothy in Ephesus, now he left Titus in Crete to deal with a teaching that has infiltrated the church.

Paul instructs Titus regarding the church's life in a pagan world. And he subverts, he writes the letter to subvert pagan culture by engendering trust in God who never lies. And by encouraging them to live a life of true virtue.

So, he writes, that he's instructing Titus in regard to how the church is to live its life out in the context of a pagan environment. And he does so by directing their attention to or engendering their faith in the God who does not lie. And in pursuing a lifestyle of true virtue as an alternative to the kind of lifestyle that Cretan culture would have taught.

Good. And that's, again, there's a lot more we could say by way of detail. But Titus is one of those books that we're going to sail over rather quickly.

And when we get to Hebrews, we will slow down quite a bit on the book of Hebrews. But I want to wrap up our discussion of Paul's letters by, in a sense, synthesizing them together. And to ask, if you were to paint in very broad brush strokes, what would be the dominant themes that you would emphasize from all of Paul's letters? What are some of the things we've seen over and over again? Or what are some of the dominant themes that have played a crucial role in Paul's thinking and teaching? And these are my suggestions.

And, again, you may think of other ones. I think one of them owes itself to a student in the past that suggested this. I can't remember which one off the top of my head.

But anyway, so I'm open to expanding this. But as I've looked at the letters and put them together, the things that I see occurring over and over again, kind of running like a thread through his letters or playing a crucial role, would be, first of all, Paul emphasizes over and over again that justification or salvation is by grace through faith, apart from works of the law, and that works are, however, works are still a necessary corollary of a life transformed by the Holy Spirit. So, it's not that works are optional or don't play any role at all or play a subsidiary or secondary role.

It's just that Paul argues clearly that justification, one's salvation, standing before God, is not achieved by the works of the law or any other works, but comes by faith in Jesus Christ, but that inevitably and as a corollary that the good works accompany that, which Paul makes clear are the result of the new covenant Holy Spirit who transforms the lives of God's people. Another dominant theme is Paul also emphasizes several times that both Jew and Gentile can now become God's people equally, and they can do so with no connection to the Mosaic Law. In other words, the Mosaic Law plays no role in determining who belongs to the people of God.

And in addition, the promises of Abraham now belong to everyone who has faith in Jesus Christ. So, remember, these two things go together. In the first century, most Jews would have answered these questions.

First of all, what does it mean to belong to the people of God? It means to live life as a Jew. That means submitting to the law of Moses, and living under the law of Moses. For males, that meant being circumcised.

For everyone, that meant observing the Sabbath, observing food laws, those things that clearly marked one off as the people of God from Gentiles. So basically, they answered the question, what does it mean to be the people of God? They answered that nationally or ethnically by adopting the Jewish way of life. The corollary was being able to trace one's... In other words, the starting point was Abraham.

Who are the true people of Abraham? Remember back in Genesis 12, where God promised Abraham that he'd have a great nation, and God would bless him, and ultimately all the nations of the earth would be blessed. So how does one participate in that blessing? How does one participate in the promises made to Abraham? By physically being Abraham's children. So that's why Paul spends so much time with Abraham because that's where the blessings of salvation and justification and the new covenant are tied to.

They're tied to being Abraham's children, but the question is, who are the true children of Abraham? Paul makes it clear that it's not those who belong to Abraham physically and ethnically, but those who have faith in Jesus Christ are now the true children of Abraham. So, if that's true, then Jews and Gentiles equally belong to the true people of God. They equally possess the promises of salvation.

They are equally justified and equally stand before God as the true people of God, based solely on faith in Jesus Christ. We saw the way Paul does that is, Paul argues Jesus Christ is the true seed of Abraham. Jesus Christ is the true promise and descendant of Abraham.

And if that's true, then the defining factor of belonging to the people of God is no longer ethnic identity or bound up with obeying the law of Moses. Now it's bound up with faith in Jesus Christ, which is why Jews and Gentile... If faith in Jesus is the only criterion, then one can see why Jews and Gentile equally can participate in the blessings of salvation that come through Abraham. Another one I find that, although this seldom gets emphasized, is that God's grace and power are made manifest through suffering and that God's people are called upon to suffer.

Notice, especially in a book like 2 Corinthians, but notice how many times Paul emphasizes suffering as the badge of his apostleship. Even in the midst of those who would point to their social status and their rhetorical flourish in their speech, Paul consistently appeals to his suffering as a sign of his apostleship. And very eloquently in 2 Corinthians, actually emphasizes a theme that begins back in the Old Testament,

and that is that God's power and grace are particularly made manifest in the midst of and through human suffering.

Another one, God's people have overcome sin and death through their being united to Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. Though sin is still a present reality that must constantly be dealt with. So, this reflects that already but not yet, the indicative and imperative tension that we've seen throughout Paul's letters.

That is, Paul is absolutely convinced and can make rather absolute statements such as, you've died to sin, and you've already been raised to newness of life. So how can you go on living in sin any longer? He can make absolute statements like that, yet then turn around and qualify himself and say, but you still need to put sin to death. Sin is still a reality that God's people struggle with.

That's part of this already but not yet tension. That Paul is convinced that we've already overcome sin. Sin has already been dealt with.

We've already been released from the power and the sphere controlled and dominated by sin and death. We've been released through that by being united to Christ's death and resurrection. That's the already.

Yet, the reality is that transfer has not yet happened exhaustively and completely. That's the not yet. Therefore, Paul still must give commands.

Put sin to death. Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies. Live.

Present yourselves to God as living. That's the not-yet aspect that must be realized through the commands and the imperatives that Paul gives. But it's important to realize that the first part provides the motivation but also the enablement for the second one.

That is, the only reason that one can overcome and deal with sin is both motivated by but also enabled by and even made possible by the first one. The only way we can overcome sin is because Paul is convinced we've already died to sin by being united to Christ. The only way that he can command us to offer ourselves as living, to offer ourselves to God as living, is because we have already been united with Christ in His resurrection.

So, the indicative is necessary not just as a motivation, but it's the very enablement for accomplishing the imperative in Paul's thought. So we've already died to Christ. We've already been, remember the slides I had with the circles, we've already been freed from the realm and the sphere that is controlled and dominated by sin and death.

And we've been transferred into a new realm, controlled by and dominated by righteousness and life and God's Holy Spirit. Yet, that transfer in one sense is not-yet final and complete. And that's the not-yet part that makes the imperative necessary.

Finally, an understanding of and a life shaped by Christ and the gospel are the best way to combat error and false teaching. And I want you to notice both of these. It's not just an intellectual.

When we think of combating false teachers, we usually think in terms intellectually that they believe something wrongly. But Paul was also interested in the resulting and corresponding lifestyle that that incorrect belief may engender. So over and over, when Paul, for example, instructs the Colossians on how to deal with a false teaching that faces them, this mystical type of Judaism, he doesn't just go after their misbelief.

He also goes after the fundamentally deceptive lifestyle or deception that that would engender as far as the kind of lifestyle they should live. So, it's both a correct belief and understanding of the gospel, but also the ethical implications of the gospel as well that will best enable the church to combat error and false teaching. I think if I were to add, I think that's my last one before we get into Hebrews.

I think if I were to add one more, I guess I would say that the last one that I would add is Paul's concern for community, that is the church, or another way of saying it is for Paul, salvation has corporate as well as individual implications. That is, Paul is clear that our justification results in belonging to a new community that transcends social distinctions and is actually a demonstration that God's plan to reconcile the entire world is already underway. So the church is kind of a signpost.

The church is kind of the first installment. The church is the agent of the reconciliation of all things that God will one day enact through Jesus Christ. So, Paul is concerned with the unity of and the community of the church, the people.

Paul knows of no such thing as a Christian who is an individual, just a Christian by themselves. They inevitably belong to the body of Christ, to a community. And therefore, it's just interesting, when you start reading Paul's letters, what gets him so ticked off is anything that threatens the unity of the church.

So that would probably be the last one I think I would add to this, is that salvation is not just individual, it also has communal dimensions. And Paul is fundamentally concerned for the unity of this body, the church, as a community. There are a lot of other things we could say about that, but I think just a cursory reading of Paul's letters makes that very clear.

Does anybody think of anything else you would add to this list?

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson teaching New Testament History and Literature, lecture 26 on 1 and 2 Timothy.