

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 2, 1 Timothy 1

© 2024 Robert Yarbrough and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough and his teaching in the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and their Followers. Session number two, 1 Timothy 1.

We continue our study of the Pastoral Epistles looking at 1 Timothy and as we look at 1 Timothy 1, I just want to say a word about the method I'm going to be using.

It's a very simple two-step method, see and say. By see I mean observe and that's not as easy as it seems. If you've ever led small group Bible studies and read a verse and then asked people to explain that verse, you'll find that people typically just say whatever they think.

They'll associate something with something in the verse and they don't really explain the verse, they explain what they feel, what they believe, or what they think based on something in the verse. So, they haven't really observed what's in the verse and in fact, good observation of something in a historical artifact like a biblical book often takes training and sometimes technical training because when we look at the NIV translation, we're not looking at the original manuscript. We're not looking at the Greek in which the document was written.

So really to see behind the English translation, optimally we need somebody who has learned Greek and then there's a whole world of factors that come to bear on why that document was written and who wrote it and when they wrote it and why they wrote it and all these factors are relevant to what this verse or this chapter is conveying. So, seeing what is there is much more difficult than one might suppose and that's why first of all we want to observe what I'm going to do as we go through these lectures I'm going to read portions of the text and make some comments as we go and then I'll get to step two and that is to state conclusions. To make observations and judgments based on what we saw, we will draw inferences and I have stated it in this way.

We're going to state conclusions faithful to the then and there and what Paul wrote to Timothy at that time for the here and now. But it's very important that we try to be faithful to what we're looking at and what is really there before we jump into the here and now and try to make some applications of it. For simplicity's sake as we go through you're going to see there's a little bit of color coding.

I do the chapter headings with green and you're going to see I mark certain words with yellow. I have certain words in red and then our observations, our step two

when we say what we have seen, that's going to be in a box. So, you'll get used to this as we proceed.

So first we read these words, Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus our hope. I said in the earlier lecture that the predominant words in the Pastorals have to do with words for God, words for the Son of God, and words for Christ. And so, I have yellowed these words on the projection because I want us to see how big a part God plays in Paul's thinking and in his counsel to Timothy and by extension his counsel to the church.

Then he writes in verse 2 to Timothy my true son in the faith. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. There's just one from there so it's from God and Christ and this is sort of a soft affirmation of the divinity of Christ because he's bracketed so closely by that word from and there's no clear distinction you could have from God and from Christ from two different sources but there's just one source and so that single preposition from is significant.

Notice also three things in these two verses that remind us of what religion we're dealing with. He says my true son and he says Christ Jesus our Lord and he says God the Father. Now in all three cases my true son Christ our Lord God the Father we're dealing with what my Old Testament professor in college taught me to recognize as covenant language.

This is a language in which God has a fatherly regard for people. A lot of people have an idea of God but it's an impersonal idea. God is the old man upstairs.

God is a force. God is kind of behind the scenes. There's a sort of classic movie in the United States called The Wizard of Oz and in The Wizard of Oz at the end, you see that the wizard is just really this guy behind a curtain who's pulling levers on a big machine and people thought it was some powerful force and it's really just a guy fooling people.

God in scripture is a God who extends himself to people as he did to Abraham and as he did for that matter to Adam and Eve or to Enoch or to Noah. And he becomes personal to people. And because we're sinners it's fearful because God is holy and he judges sin. But because God is forgiving and slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, he's a God who wants to establish a relationship with people so that he can rescue them and so that they can enjoy fellowship and they can live lives of purity before him and lives of positive interaction with him.

David in the Psalm says, How I long for you O Lord as the deer pants for the water so my soul longs for you. There's something in us that longs for a close relationship with God. The beautiful thing about the religion of the Bible is that this is not only something between people and God but it's between people and people. And so, he

says to Timothy, my true son in the faith. Paul had a hand in Timothy's birth into a knowledge of God through faith in Christ. So, in that sense, he's a father figure to Timothy. God the Father was a divine Father figure. Timothy is a human father figure to Paul.

What I'm saying is that right from the beginning we see that there's a relation here. There's a relational component to the pastoral epistles that it's easy to miss because, for a lot of people, the pastor is kind of it's a formal thing. It's an office thing in the church it's a place you go to and there are church offices. There are rules and there are programs. You can go your whole life in the church and people do go their whole lives in the church sometimes. God never really becomes personal to them.

I know somebody very near and dear to me and she grew up in a well-known Christian religion. It was not until she was 19 years old that God became personal to her. She had gone to religious school and she knew the Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, and Ten Commandments. She believed in the Trinity and she believed the Bible was all true. But she had a dream and in this dream, she was sleeping. In her dream, she was sleeping and there was a knock at the door. She had read that verse in Revelation, which says, Behold I stand at the door and knock. Jesus is knocking at the door. She was struggling with things in her life. In her dream, she was sleeping in her bed and she heard Jesus knocking on the door and she just went back to sleep. She did not get up and open the door.

When she woke up she was terrified what have I done. God spoke to her through this dream and helped her to see she had not really gotten up and opened her heart to Jesus. And so, while she believed in her religion and she believed in God, this was not God the Father of our Lord. She did not share a fellowship of Jesus' Lordship and personal presence in her life with other people because she had never opened herself up to that.

So, we see this relational dynamic of Paul who knows Christ Jesus and Timothy his true son. One of the prominent words in the pastoralist is kalos which means good, but it also means beautiful and just.

In these first two verses, we see a beauty in what Paul and Timothy share. They're going to be dealing with in this letter a few other observations.

First of all, when Paul says he's an apostle just because of the way that word gets used it takes on a feel for some people kind of like the pope in Catholicism. The pope is in charge of everything in the church. Apostle is a word he's in charge. He's got a lot of power and he thinks we should all listen to him.

But the word apostle means someone who is under someone else's authority. In American English, we have something called power of attorney. If you want to give somebody your legal authority you can sign papers and then they can bargain on your behalf. But legally they have to bargain on your behalf. They have your power of attorney.

They don't have the power to do whatever they want to do. They're under your leadership. Paul had a commission to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. He was under his control. The NIV says by the command of God. But in Greek the word is kata which means according to, in accordance with, in support of, under the authorization of, God's command.

So, this is important because of what Paul is going to tell Timothy he's going to put Timothy under a charge. But Paul starts out by saying implicitly Timothy what I'm going to lay on you is nothing other than what has been laid on me. I'm not writing to you as a free agent. I'm not writing you as sort of a papal authority. I'm not writing to you as a human being that's trying to wield influence. I'm writing to you as somebody who is under Christ Jesus' authority by the command of God our Savior.

So, when you add all that up he's really got himself, you could say, humbled under the rule of Christ.

And under God's command, he mentions God our Savior. Now there are two you could say, two prepositions there. God our Savior and more particularly for Timothy's situation Christ Jesus our hope. I think he says this right before he says to Timothy, I think he ends on the note of hope because of how much hope is needed in ministry.

Sometimes in life, sometimes in ministry you just don't want to get up in the morning you get hopeless because you get tired, and you get weary of the pressure. You get weary of the demands that are on your time and energy. As you get older you get less and less energy and so you can lose hope because you can just lose the strength that you need every day to get all the things that you want to get done.

He says you have a hope Timothy Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus. But that hope is not Timothy hoping that hope is Christ Jesus.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope. When Paul converted in Acts chapter 9 on the road to Damascus implicit in God dealing with him through Jesus and through the Holy Spirit was a command but also hope.

Now there was a realization that God is faithful and because God is faithful what he sets us out to do he will bestow his grace. What form that grace takes we don't

know. We know that in the course of biblical history often it's what we could call a cross God's designs for us, God's future for us, God's sure promises in our future those are all our hope.

Sometimes they're not difficult. They're not easy to bear but here he sets before Timothy Christ Jesus as his hope. This is a reminder that throughout Paul's letter he's not just giving information but he's creating space for Timothy to reaffirm hour by hour, day by day what all of us who follow Christ seek to reaffirm, and that is the living presence of Christ in our life.

Christ is our hope. Hope is not just human optimism. It's the person of Christ exercising his lordship in our lives. I also need to underscore here you see three times Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus. In the Pastoral Epistles almost all the time when Paul mentions Christ he mentions him with those two words in that order.

A lot has been written over the last couple of centuries about what Christ does or does not mean. I'm sure the discussion will continue on. But I think here he's using Christ to designate because he's writing to Timothy a fellow Jew and I think we should think of this term very much in terms of Old Testament Messianic predictions that the hope of the world is the salvation of God's people. It is the hope of a world that needs a savior that is the promised one the anointed one, the king who would come, the fulfillment of promises to Abraham and to David and to many others. That would be the Messiah the Christos, the Christ.

So, Paul is an apostle he's an emissary he's a delegate of that one that he and Timothy and their forebears had awaited for millennia. He's Christ. He's the Messiah but he is Jesus or Yeshua. He's Joshua or Iesus in Greek. We translate it into English as Jesus. He's that man from Nazareth who went about doing good and was crucified was buried but on the third day rose according to the scriptures. He is seated at the right hand of God.

So, I don't think that we have grounds to say Timothy was doubt or was doubting. I think Timothy was facing difficulties and in difficulties we struggle. Having said that he was in the first generation of a family that had become Messianic Jews. At that time and still today, in the Jewish tradition when people say that Jesus is the Savior, Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus is the hope of the Jewish people, there's often a very negative reaction to that.

Part of that reaction is you are no longer welcome in your family. You are effectively dead to us because you have betrayed who we are. We are the sons of Abraham. People who say that Jesus is the Son of God, have betrayed the conviction of our people. From back in the gospels that he was not that person he was a false prophet

and he was rightly put to death at that time because he was trying to mislead people. We don't believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

What I'm saying is that Timothy, because of both pagan opposition and Jewish opposition, needed to be assured that Christ Jesus was who Paul knew him to be and who Timothy had accepted him as being. But difficulties can make the best man or woman cry out to God, God where are you.

I think of Jesus on the cross, Why have you forsaken me. Some people say, well that was kind of just him repeating something in the Psalms to confirm his dedication to the Word of God. That may be true but I tend to think it really does show us what extremities can reduce us to and even reduce the Son of God to in human flesh. Things were so bad not that he doubted God but that in his humanity he did not feel his upholding presence. He felt desolate and deserted. Certainly, ministry and life bring those feelings on us. It cannot be reinforced enough that we have Christ Jesus for whom we labor and in whose name and under whose authorization we do we do what we do.

He will come through because he is the promised one. God is true to his promises.

A third observation I'll make here. He wishes Timothy grace, mercy, and peace. I think this is just shorthand for the enablement that Timothy needs to lay hold of hope and to fulfill his ministry. We all need to be enabled and we all know this. If you're a Christian that we don't do anything good of ourselves. Jesus said apart from me you can do nothing that is nothing good and redemptive. But I still forget that and maybe you do too.

So, if we break down the enablement with that we need what it look like. We could probably think of 50 things that God's enabling looks like. But Paul just uses three very large sweeping terms all with very very deep Old Testament reverberations and backgrounds. Grace is probably hesed. It's God's loving kindness. It's what caused Isaiah to say come and buy without money. Come and receive what God offers to those who call on his name. It is a blessing they cannot earn but a blessing that God is only too eager to grant to people to come into a personal relationship with him. If they repent of their sins and turn to him from their hearts.

Mercy is a closely related term sometimes they mean the same thing grace. I see it is something that's more a positive enablement and mercy is more specific having to do with that part of God that makes him willing and able to wash away your sins and extend to you clemency. It is where you deserve judgment God is merciful.

Then peace is a term that occurs many times in the Old Testament shalom and it's a term that is the full scope of God's blessing. It's salvation, it's well-being, it's

contentment with God, it's fullness of God's presence, and it's God's protection. It's everything that you could connect with God and his promises extended to us and appropriated by us and by the people of God in the world.

Timothy is going to be weathering some tough things. He is weathering tough things but he has God's grace mercy and peace. Paul writes not from himself. He writes from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord because he is an apostle under the authority. He is under the commissioning of those individuals who are really one individual God, three in one. He is under of God the Father and the Son and by their command.

So, if you look at your NIV you'll see that there's another heading and that's how I'm structuring these epistles. I'm just structuring them the way that you're going to see them if you use an NIV Bible which I think is the most prevalent English translation. Where English translations are used there's not a lot of you know technical consensus on the structuring of the Pastoral Epistles. So, I'm not spending a lot of time on how we should outline them and break them down. There are lots of outlines of the Pastoral Epistles that are online or in commentaries. So, I'm just going with these chapter headings. I think that they'll serve us well enough.

So, Paul writes, "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer, or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies." Why are certain words in red certain words are going to be in red because these are commands or imperatives whether grammatically in Greek it's an imperative form. Or whether it is just de facto in terms of what the text is implying this is something that Timothy or the people that he's working with need to do.

This is a reminder that we've already talked about, the relational component of this religion of the Old and New Testament. This faith in Messiah, this faith in Christ, it's about love, it's about relationship, it's about rapport, it's about personal presence, it's about friendship.

But it's also about action because of that relationship because of God's commands, and because of God's leading. God has things for us to do. So that's what we call that ethics. 1 Timothy is very much about ethics as well as about love and relationship. Of course, the thing it's about the most is about doctrine about didaskalia or teaching. In other places, I make up an xyz diagram with x being the axis on which we have faith or belief and we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and we will be saved. But we also are called to act as faith without works is dead. So, you have a y-axis and if you are a Christian you have believed and you follow what you believe. But then there's also a z coordinate if you're good at engineering or math you can draw this out xyz. X is love. Y is devotion. Z is relationship with God.

When the gospel came into life, when it came into Paul's life, when it came into Timothy's life, not only did it involve the doctrine that Jesus is the Messiah, not only did it involve something that's very much a part of Old Testament religion but on the face of it, if you want to be right with God then follow God's instruction, his Torah. We translate it law but that's probably not the best translation. Guidance, follow the guidance that God gives, follow his commands. That's what it means to be in relationship with God.

But the relationship comes that makes it possible for us to do what God calls on us to do. So, there's a command here to command certain people but it's informed by the teaching of who God is and the relationship that has been established between Timothy and Paul both of them and God.

Now because of this mention of myths and genealogies, a lot of scholars think that probably there's a Jewish background to at least some of what Timothy is facing. There are genealogies in the book of Matthew, there are genealogies in the book of Luke. Genealogies are significant for Christianity but they're also significant in the Old Testament. If you wanted to disprove something about Jesus being the Messiah then you might well advance a different genealogy and say, well no I've got a different way of explaining his origin and who he is.

Myths existed both in the pagan world and in the Jewish world at this time. We have lots of Jewish writings where they would imagine things that they're not even representative of having happened. They were just more imaginative speculative writings.

But Paul is facing, and Timothy is facing a situation in which there are people teaching false doctrines and they're devoting themselves to myths and speculations and genealogies. Paul says such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work which is by faith. It's not by genealogies. It's not by speculations. It's not by myths. It's not by narratives that are outside the Bible that you can use to hijack the Bible in the interest of these alternate narratives.

No, God's work is advanced by faith in the narrative that God has given us the Old Testament. Its predictions of who Jesus would, what form the Messiah would take and its fulfillment in him. Now the NIV translates this word "work" and that's okay. The word is *oikonomia* and it's a word that there's no good English word for. It's administration, it's the order of the household. It's the economy God sets up for his work to flourish in. It's very close to idea of kingdom in that God is the king administering all he administers. But I just want to flush that work out, that word out, a little bit. Advancing God's work is very ambiguous. What's God's work? Well God's work is his management of the world to the redemptive end that he has for it.

That's what Christians should be involved in advancing God's work, not speculating and making up cute things and stories that take them away from that oikonomia, that plan that structure of God and his intentions for the world and his people.

Now notice command in verse three, "Command certain people" is in red. Then in verse five he says the goal of this command and keep those together. And that word command it's a good word but it's the same word that the writer, the NIV editors, when they say Timothy charged that he's commanded.

So, there this is a stern beginning. It's a relational beginning. It's a warm beginning, but it's also stern because Timothy is being put under a charge that he cannot get out of. The goal of this charge it's backed from stern to warm. It's love and this is love from a pure heart because the gospel cleanses our hearts and a good conscience because the gospel is true. It's a sincere faith a faith that's not faked. It really is our deepest conviction that God's promises have been fulfilled in Jesus. We are committed to live out whatever that means in our lives. That's the goal of the command relation with God from a pure heart and a good conscience--sincere faith.

Now Paul's fervor is expressed in these next couple of verses. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. We're back to myths, genealogies, and speculations. The fact just the way he puts this, it requires that we say either these are people that are in the church or there are people that are close enough to the church that they're affecting the church. These are not people in some other country but they're people who are directly affecting Timothy's mandate at Ephesus.

And so, it's very important that Timothy be who he needs to be, who God can make him to be, to counter those who are departing. They're departing from the gospel, they're departing from Christ and God.

They want to be teachers of the law. There again while commentators differ, I think it's most likely these are these are Jewish either believers or pseudo-believers. They want to be teachers of the law but they do not know what they're talking about or what they so confidently affirm. In other words, they are clueless when it comes to what they're saying. I'll come back to that. "We know that the law is good if one uses it properly, we also know that the law is made not for the righteous."

Now let me just pause there and say the proper use of the law first of all would be a civil use. For example, in many countries, murder is a crime, and murder is forbidden in the Bible. There are a lot of things in the Bible that are taught that are very good. They are the basis for civil law and they are encoded in systems of law around the world. They're true in part because they're in God's Word but there's a second use of the law that's very important.

Paul elsewhere says the law is our tutor to bring us to Christ. The law convicts us of sin. The law says you're a lawbreaker and the wages of sin is death. So we need the free gift of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then there is a third use of the law which there's a quibbling about in Christianity and especially Luther often is credited with not affirming this third use. I affirm the third use. The third use is guidance for Christians not to be justified, not to be saved by keeping the law, but "blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked or stand in the path of sinners or sit in the seat of scoffers. But his delight is in the law the Torah" The guidance, the instruction of the Lord, disciples of Christ can learn a lot about the righteousness of God and the will of God by studying the guidance of the commands of God. That's the third use.

So, the law is good if it's used properly. We know it's not made for the righteous that is, for the righteous to be justified but it's made for lawbreakers and rebels who need Christ. They need to be convicted of their sin.

Also, we need to have laws against some of these things in our civil law. The ungodly and sinful the unholy. They're religious for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders, and liars and perjurers.

Now Paul knew his Old Testament very very well. So, he's just grabbing some things that are among the most heinous acts of man against God. God in his law there's no careful structure here although some people say that he's kind of going through the Ten Commandments in his mind and giving some examples of sinful behavior that sort of reverberate with the Ten Commandments. If so it's a loose association and I don't think it's highly important that we identify that.

I think what we can identify as kind of number one these things are serious infractions. There are crimes against God and in many cases, they're crimes against other people.

Number two there are things we're all guilty of directly or indirectly but in the gospel we are forgiven of those things. We weren't forgiven because we quit murdering and we didn't murder anymore and we did enough good things that we're not murderers. If you're a murderer, you're a murderer but Christ died for the ungodly and so no matter how ungodly someone may have been Christ's forgiveness is sufficient to forgive them of it.

But not if they will not believe in Christ, not if they will not say I'm a sinner and I need the blood of your atonement for me to be made right with God. If we don't say that then we're reduced to saying well this is how to be right with God live like this, follow

these rules. That's an improper use of the law. When we say to be right with God if you follow these rules this is how you do it, Paul says this is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel.

Concerning the glory of the blessed God which he entrusted to me. So, there's this glorious gospel of salvation apart from works of the law. There's this glorious good news that we could do nothing to earn our redemption or to undo the penalty of our sin. We can't do anything. It's done. But God can take away the penalty of our sin through this glorious gospel that Paul had entrusted to him.

So, in these verses, we just looked at what we can observe first, it's tempting to give up when we shouldn't. Timothy should not give up but evidently, Paul sensed that he could be wavering. He says to stay there.

Secondly, we observe Timothy's charge was entirely positive and redemptive. It's easy to stress you got to stay there in command and Timothy then becomes sort of a policeman or somebody who's half angry at people. He's got to go and he's got to set things straight. But remember if you read the Gospels you are reminded of how benevolent Jesus' presence was. How he went about and he connected with people and he had some bruising encounters but he didn't lose his benevolence. He had a good aim in mind for people and Timothy had a charge whose goal was love and it was going to be administered from Timothy's heart, conscience, and faith which had been granted to him by God's grace. This is a very redemptive message.

Thirdly people easily turn aside from God's love in the gospel that's in verses six and seven people were doing that. Paul says some have departed. They want to be teachers. They don't know what they're talking about. Our self-righteousness tempts us to influence others in our direction even if that direction is benighted. Sometimes students ask me you showed us that this scholar who devoted his whole life to a Greek dictionary that he really didn't believe in Jesus and his resurrection. Why do scholars devote themselves to the studying the Bible if they don't believe it.

While I can't answer that question for anybody. Personally, I can say looking even at my own tendencies we are all self-righteous and we all like to lord things over other people. We like for other people to do what we think they should do. If we have training then the more training we get the more we get trained to influence other people so they acknowledge we're right. This, of course, implies that they're not so right. So, we may think we know things when we don't really know those things at all. Just because you think you know something it doesn't mean you do know it.

There's actually a short poem by John Maysfield which I recall when I was thinking about the Pastoral Epistles and I actually read it in a commentary by Leon Morris and

I never forgot it. But John Maysfield was the poet laureate in England through much of the 20th century and it's a very short poem. It goes like this.

The trained mind outs the upright soul
 as Jesus said the trained mind might be
 wiser than the sons of light,
 but trained men's minds are spread so thin
 they let all kinds of darkness in.
 Whatever light men find they doubt it.
 They love not light but talk about it.

You can google that there's a lot of wisdom and there's a lot of directions you can go in that poem. It's a very ambiguous poem but I think the point is very clear. We can be trained and be misleading people. Our world is full of highly trained people who are misleading others when it comes to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It's not because they're not smart. They may be morally good in many ways there may be a lot of truth of things they say but at the core, there may be a denial of God's work, of God's Son, and also of our need for a Savior.

We also learned and were reminded in this passage that God's Old Testament moral law is valid up in that verse he says we know that the law is good, it's beautiful, it's noble, when it's not misused. Keeping the law is not salvific. It's good to obey God's rules but it's not going to save your soul. The law teachers I gather seem to have viewed keeping the law as a means of grace. Paul and Timothy know that Christ is the sole means of God's saving grace.

So, we want to make sure that we're not obeying God thinking that somehow that justifies us or establishes a hold on God where we can manipulate God because if we do X then he will do Y. That's not grace that's earning wages and that's not how we relate to God.

Next, we have a heading "The Lord's Grace to Paul." "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord" and remember the yellows remind us of this work of God, "who has given me strength that he considered me trustworthy appointing me to his service." The word for service there is diakonia from which we get Deacon. It's often translated ministry but it's menial ministry. It's the kind of service that you want to hire somebody else to do. "Even though I once was a blasphemer" that's just somebody who speaks against what's holy. "and a persecutor and a violent man," kind of implies he had a temper. "I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief."

In local news just this this past weekend 50-something Nigerians were shot and burned up and exploded in a church in Nigeria. A few weeks, within the last few weeks, there have been other people set on fire and killed. Rage and anger are often

a part of these scenes. You get people are very angry and they riot and they get stirred up. Then they shoot somebody or they set somebody on fire. That's the picture you get of Paul. He was a violent person, a persecutor. He wanted to extirpate this group and if people believed that Jesus was the Messiah they were not going to get away with it if he could help it.

“The grace of our Lord” and I think in Greek there's a conjunction there. “but the grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” So again you have to go back to the Damascus Road incident and read about Paul being struck blind for three days. Then he knows a lot about Christ and about the Christian message because he's been persecuting people. Moreover in chapter 9 that's after chapter 8. In Acts 8 he heard Stephen's speech Stephen made a very long speech in Acts chapter 7. When he got done with his speech then the people heard it they got enraged and they were violently angry. When they picked up rocks because you can't wear all your clothes if you're picking up rocks maybe it's a chilly day and maybe they had extra robes that they laid aside at the feet of somebody named Saul/Paul.

So, he had heard, he'd been witness to if not by anybody else by Stephen. So, he knew what he was doing but he says I acted in ignorance and unbelief it hadn't really come to him yet who Jesus was. He was so vehement in his opposition that he was blinded. Then God's grace changed all that and with that grace came faith and came love because that's what Christ Jesus brings into our lives. He brings faith and love into us.

Well, now here's the first statement that Timothy can take to the bank. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst.” I'm the foremost, I'm exhibit A of somebody that you would think could never be forgiven by God. Surely if you're killing Christians you're not going to be forgiven by God. You're going to be punished by God. But he says Christ Jesus this promised Messiah came into the world for a very menial purpose he's going to save individual sinners like I was or like the thief on the cross was or if you are a Christian like you were or like I was.

We were all notable sinners but Paul writes for that very reason I said earlier that God delights to change impossible situations. Just as in the Old Testament, he chose Israel because it was such an unlikely group of people. They were not numerous, they were not esteemed, they were not gifted, and nobody would have chosen them to be the instruments of God's redemption to the world. But he used them so that nobody could say or that nobody should have said hey we did it. Now they did say that that's human pride but they had no grounds for it. Paul had no grounds for saying I've received God's grace but for that very reason he says I was shown mercy. so that in me the worst of sinners Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Then there is the first of several doxologies in the Pastoral Epistles. “Now to the King Eternal.” That word King is the Greek word which is the same word really as Christos which is Messiah anointed one but the Messiah is a king in the Old Testament. He's David's descendant. David is the king. So there there's an overlap between the messianic idea and the basileia the king idea in Greek. So, he distinguishes the son with Messiah the one that was sent to the sender, the king.

“Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Observations, there's hope for hopeless sinners. Remember he said Christ Jesus our hope. Timothy is weathering difficulties he needs hope. Hope starts with your heart. It starts inside of you. If your hope is just external to you. Hope is in circumstances even if your hope is in Christ but he's out there somewhere then that's not going to hold you up. You need to make it personal. Paul makes it personal and he wants Timothy to make it personal. Timothy don't give up because God does great works in difficult circumstances. Look what he did for me. He can do that for you.

Secondly, that doxology strengthens the normativity of this statement for Timothy's situation. God loves great odds and he loves to beat the odds. Paul marvels at a God. So, unlike the one he had imagined before the Damascus Road, I take it that this was more the God of the law, the God of keeping his commandments, the God of killing people that are against God because they don't keep his law. That had been Paul's hope. We're going to tamp this down by arresting people and by stoning people.

He has a doxology that glorifies a God who works in different ways. The God of the Bible is not a God who is big on extending the church by killing people. So, Timothy should have hope.

Now the charge of Timothy is renewed and this will just take a couple of minutes. “Timothy, my son, I'm giving you this command.” Notice the continuity from the charge in verse 3 all the way through chapter 1. He's got this command or this charge or this mandate that he's putting on Timothy. “I'm giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you.” So that we're “recalling them you may fight the battle well.” Fight the good fight. He's going to mention that in chapter 6 ministry is often a fight not only a fight but it's often a battle holding on this is another command.

“Holding on to faith and a good conscience” you have them in the gospel but hold on to them. “which some have rejected and so I've suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith.” They've turned away from the faith.

Now he names two of them. "Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander whom I've handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme."

Just a few observations to wrap up chapter 1. First, a sense of calling can make or break one's ministry. When he says I'm giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them he's inviting Timothy to remember how he got into this. God called him into it. This is hazy. We don't have specifics but the picture you get is that Timothy says yes to Paul's invitation and to God's invitation to join him in the apostolic ministry on the second missionary journey in Acts chapter 16. That's one scenario.

Another scenario is at Timothy's conversion about which we know nothing specific but in his conversion, he confesses faith in Christ and that people said X Y & Z is of you we sense that from boyhood you were you were destined to do something great in God's kingdom. There were prophecies made about him that he could think back on.

Again if you're listening to a lecture like this you probably have a track record and probably God spoke to you somehow and you have a sense of calling. You have a sense of a charge that you need to make progress and you need to fulfill God's expectations for. You cherish that sense and if you had brothers or sisters in the faith that that reinforced it, you cherish and nurture their friendships because they will help you to recall and keep you stable so that you don't forget what God has extended to and gifted you with which is a great opportunity but also a great responsibility.

Secondly, because ministry is opposed and he even gives names, it can be arduous and bruising and there should be no illusions about the ease of discipling other people whether you're a pastor or whether you're just doing the work of diakonia of service making disciples. As Jesus told us all to do there are risks associated with it. There are sacrifices associated with it. It's not even easy to listen to lectures and learn because the more you learn the more you realize I have a job to do. Why am I torturing myself? Why don't I just stay shallow and not make myself responsible for more things? But there's something in us that wants to make us get deeper with God and be more effective in his service. That's arduous. It wears us down and it's bruising but God renews us.

I just love it that Paul is not here just like being sweet and optimistic and joyful. There's not just a bunch of praise rhetoric. Here there's very solid praise in that doxology but it's a real realism about the cost what Bonhoeffer called the Cost of Discipleship.

Thirdly observe that the rate of converts attrition converts fall away. I was in a ministry situation in a Muslim-majority country and I was there for 12 years ministering two times a year and in the 12th year one of the main co-workers and organizers turned out to be a security agent. He turned lots of people in and they were arrested and then there was an outbreak against the churches in the whole region. This was somebody that everybody had thought for over 10 years he was a convert. He was on the staff of the church but he had converted from another religion. He had never really let it go to his heart which undermines morale. When you're betrayed like that you're betrayed and people can be tempted then to question God or question the gospel.

Timothy is forewarned and Paul doesn't take it lying down. This is another thing that we don't we wish we knew or about. He says I've handed this person these people over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme. I think one of the things it means at least is that he's no longer praying for them. We know that Paul prayed for his followers.

He prayed for the churches and I think this was the end of his prayers for them. I think this was a shift in his prayers to God. God, I want you to turn your trying sifting agent Satan. Satan is not a rival God. Satan doesn't do anything outside of God's governance. Most times, in most places, and most ways Satan is restrained from most people but even Christians can be tempted. When they're tempted it's by Satan, it's by evil, it's not by God directly. But he has an agent tempting doesn't go on without God's oversight.

So, he's saying I am opening up Hymenaeus and Alexander to the ministry of God's sifting trying agent so that they'll be taught to zip their lip. We know from 1 Corinthians 5 there's a similar situation and Paul says I've prayed for this person to be handed over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. There's a redemptive aim in this. This is not just punitive God has hope for these men. In the meantime, they're doing the devil's work and Timothy has to stand up to them for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of his own soul, and for the sake of the church.

That's all we have time for in chapter one. Thank you.

This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough and his teaching in the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and their Followers. Session number two, 1 Timothy 1.