

1 Timothy

Purpose: “To develop the charge he had given his young assistant, Timothy” (edited from NIV Study Bible).

Outline: 1:1-20 – Paul’s Teaching, Testimony and Initial Charge to Timothy

2:1-15 – Instructions for Prayer and Worship

3:1-16 – Instructions for Church Leaders

4:1-16 – Dealing with False Teachers

5:1-6:2 – Dealing with Different Groups in the Church

6:3-21 – Paul’s Teaching and Final Charge to Timothy

Author: Paul

Date: 62-64 AD after Paul’s imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28)

Highlights:

1 & 2 Timothy, along with Titus, are known as Paul’s “Pastoral Epistles” or the “Pastoral Letters” because they give instruction to Timothy and Titus concerning the pastoral care of churches.

During his “fourth/fifth” missionary journey (after he was released from Rome), Paul had instructed Timothy to care for the church at Ephesus while he went on to Macedonia (1:3), realizing that he might not return to Ephesus in the near future (3:14-15). The account of this journey does not appear in the book of Acts, like Paul’s other journeys, but is pieced together from references in the Pastoral Epistles.

This first letter to Timothy (in Ephesus) and the letter to Titus (in Crete) were most likely while Paul was in Philippi (of Macedonia). The second letter to Timothy was written about 4 years later.

In the first chapter, Paul tells Timothy that he needs to stay in Ephesus in order to command certain men not to teach false doctrines. Apparently there were men in the church who were teaching, falsely, about matters – especially in regards to the law. Paul then recounts his testimony about God’s grace to him, the worst of sinners. And charges Timothy to fight the good fight, hold on to faith, and have a good conscience. NOTE: compare 1:19b-20 with Matthew 18:17 and 1 Corinthians 5:5,13

Chapter Two begins two chapters worth of instructions regarding the life of the church. Paul first addresses the issue of worship before moving on to the qualifications for church leaders.

Two important issues are raised in chapter Two. 1) We are to pray because God wants all people to be saved. Does this mean that all people are saved? No. There will be some who hear the truth and reject it. There will be others who never hear the truth, because of the failure of the church to play its missionary role.

2) The role of women in worship. 1 Timothy 2:9-15 (esp. vss. 11-12) gives evidence that women should not be ordained as ministers or elders. Paul is giving this teaching to Timothy at this church in Ephesus. There is a tremendous amount of false teaching at this church. And, as we shall see in 1 Timothy 3:11; 5:11-15 and 2 Timothy (esp. 3:1-7), these false teachers seem especially to have made inroads among some of the women in the church.

Chapter Three gives instructions regarding the qualifications of overseers (or elders – the two words are used interchangeably by Paul – cf. Titus 1:5-7) and deacons. Note that 3:11 is usually translated “their wives;” however, the Greek word is “women.” So this may refer to the wives of deacons or to deaconesses. Paul’s insertion of this verse probably reflects Paul’s concern that women, in particular, have not fared well at the hands of the false teachers.

Chapters Four and Five teach Timothy (and us) how to deal with false teachers and the various groups within the church. Groups named in Chapter Five are widows, elders; and slaves are mentioned at the beginning of Chapter Six.

Chapter Six continues with some final teaching from Paul concerning false teachers and the “love of money.” Note that it is not money that is the root of all evil (as often misquoted) but it is the

“*love of money*”, which is the root “*of all kinds of evil.*” From there, Paul issues a final charge to Timothy.

2 Timothy

Purpose: “For Paul to say his final words”

Outline: 1:1-18 – Timothy and Paul – Loyal to the Faith

2:1-26 – Instructions to Timothy

3:1-9 – Warning About the Last Days

3:10-4:22 – Paul’s Final Charge and Farewell

Author: Paul

Date: 67-68 AD during Paul’s second imprisonment in Rome, shortly before he is executed

Highlights:

1 & 2 Timothy, along with Titus, are known as Paul’s “Pastoral Epistles” or the “Pastoral Letters” because they give instruction to Timothy and Titus concerning the pastoral care of churches.

The early Christian writing, 1 Clement (in the first century) tells us that Paul was martyred in Rome. The fourth-century church historian, Eusebius, preserves a tradition that Paul was martyred under Nero on his second visit to Rome. Nero died in 68 A.D. So it is understood that Paul was executed in 67 or 68 A.D.

Paul, who is back in prison in Rome, writes this second letter to Timothy. This time it is not just a house arrest, but would appear to be a more harsh imprisonment shortly before his execution. You can hear the emotion and finality in Paul’s words.

In the first chapter, Paul recalls the faith that Timothy received. The faith was first received by his grandmother, then his mother, then by him. The words of 1:6-7 are words that all church leaders should live by. Paul reveals that many people have deserted him while he is in prison. Verse 17 indicates that finding out where Paul was imprisoned was not an easy task (compared with his first imprisonment).

The second chapter contains uplifting teaching for Timothy (and us). The “trustworthy saying” of verses 11-13 is probably from an early Christian hymn. The rest of the chapter is one phrase after another of important truths, especially in regards to Christian ministry.

Chapter Three begins with some very important teaching regarding the “last days.” As you read through the list in verses 2-5, you can’t help but notice how accurately that describes today’s culture and people. Again, Paul highlights women as ones who will be most easily corrupted by this evil manifested in the last days.

The final charge to Timothy begins in 3:10. The charge, which runs from 3:10-4:5 is an outpouring of everything Paul wants to say to Timothy about Christian ministry. Note the truth of 4:3-4 as it relates to the world of today (not just the secular world, but also in the Christian Church).

Paul begins his final remarks in 4:6. He knows that his ministry, and his life in this world, is coming to an end; but he is ready for the world, which is to come. He hopes for Timothy to come to Rome, that Paul might see him one last time. Only Luke remains with Paul.

We don’t have much information about Timothy’s life and ministry after the death of Paul. He is mentioned in Hebrews 13:23 as being released from prison.

In the last verse the word “your” is singular – intended just for Timothy. The last word “you” is plural – indicating that the letter was intended for public use.

And so we ought to use it.