

Week of October 8 - 14

Doing What Is Good (Titus 3)

Paul has been giving Titus instructions on what to teach the believers at the churches on the island of Crete. He says, "Remind your people to obey the government, and always be obedient and ready for any honest work. They shouldn't speak evil of anyone, nor quarrel, but be gentle and genuinely courteous to all. Once we were foolish and disobedient, deceived by others, and became slaves to evil pleasures and wicked desires. Our lives were full of resentment and envy. We hated others, and they hated us.

"But when Christ appeared, he saved us because of his kindness and pity, washing away our sins and gave us the joy of the Holy Spirit Whom he poured out on us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did so that He could declare us good in God's eyes. Now we share the wealth of eternal life He gives us. These things I've told you are true. Insist on them so Christians will be careful to do good deeds all the time.

"Don't get involved in arguing over unanswerable questions and controversial theological ideas. Keep out of arguments and quarrels about obedience to Jewish laws. It isn't worthwhile and only harms others. If someone is causing divisions, give him a first and second warning. After that, have nothing to do with him. He's sinning, and he knows it.

"Everybody here sends greetings. Say hello to all my Christian friends. May God's blessings be with you all."

1 Timothy Overview

Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him to oversee the work of the Ephesian church and possibly other churches in the province of Asia. The letter gives instructions for ordaining elders and deacons. It also is a leadership manual for church organization and administration.

This is the first letter Paul wrote to Timothy, a young pastor who helped Paul in his work. Timothy was a Greek. His mother was a Jewess, and his father was Greek. Paul was like a father to him, and Timothy was like a son to Paul. He begins his letter urging Timothy to be on guard for false teachers and false doctrine. But much of the letter deals with pastoral conduct. He instructs Timothy in worship and developing mature leaders for the church. Most of the letter deals with pastor conduct, warnings about false teachers, and the church's responsibility toward single members, widows, elders, and slaves. Paul encourages Timothy to stand firm, to persevere, and to remain faithful to his calling.

Be on Guard for False Teachers and Doctrine (1 Timothy 1)

Paul told Timothy to stay in Ephesus, a town that was once Greek, then became Roman, and now is part of modern-day Turkey. He wanted Timothy to make sure false doctrines were not being taught there. He warned that some people might want to teach, but they shouldn't because they don't know what they are teaching. He told Timothy to teach the doctrine properly, so he insisted that he stay in Ephesus.

He told Timothy that the two of them knew that the law was not made for people who follow it, but for people who wanted to break it, listing the types of people he talked about, those who kill their parents, murderers, liars, and other criminal types.

Then Paul praises God and Jesus Christ, Whom he learned to follow after years of being a blasphemer and a persecutor of Christians. He said he was able to give up his harmful and foolish ways through the mercy of the Lord.

Paul then reminded Timothy that Jesus came to earth to save sinners and that he, Paul, was certainly one of the chief sinners. He claimed that all who follow Christ would find everlasting life.

He encouraged Timothy, saying, "Fight well in the Lord's battles. Cling tightly to your faith in Christ and always keep your conscience clear, doing what you know is right. Some people have disobeyed their consciences and have deliberately done what they knew was wrong. It isn't surprising that soon they lost their faith in Christ after defying God like that. Hymenaeus and Alexander are two examples of this. I had to give them over to Satan to punish them until they could learn not to bring shame to the name of Christ."

Instructions in worship (1Timothy 2)

Paul tells Timothy to pray for others. Plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks for all God is going to do for them.

He says, "Pray for kings and others in authority over us or in places of high responsibility, so we can live in peace and quietness, spending our time in godly living and thinking about the Lord. This is good and pleases God. There is only one God, along with one mediator (Jesus Christ) between man and God. Jesus gave Himself to save all people.

"So, I want men everywhere to pray with holy hands lifted to God, free from sin and anger and resentment. Women should be the same way, quiet and sensible in manner and clothing. Christian women should be noticed for being kind and good, not for the way they fix their hair or because of their jewels or fancy clothes. They should listen and learn quietly and humbly.

"I never let women teach men or lord over them. They should be silent in church meetings because God made Adam first, and afterward, he made Eve. And it wasn't Adam who was fooled by Satan, but Eve, and sin was the result. So, God sent pain and suffering to women when their children are born, but he will save their souls if they trust him, living quiet, good, and loving lives."

Elders and Deacons (1Timothy 3)

Paul describes the qualifications for elders, deacons, and their wives, and their behavior. The elder position is considered to be honorable and desirable.

The qualities of being an elder include being a man of high character and possessing a strong belief in Christian virtues. He must have shown to be the leader of his household before ruling in the church.

The position is described as one best served by an older man, versus a younger one who may be a victim to youthful temptations. He must relate well to non-Christians because part of his responsibilities will bring them into the flock. His integrity must be unquestioned.

As for the deacons, these men should be candid, temperate, and serious, while holding to the gospel. It must be proved through their past actions that they are worthy of working in the church. These men shall not be polygamists, and their wives must also be of pure virtues. The

wives must be thoughtful, not heavy drinkers, not gossipers, but faithful in everything they do. Timothy needed to be well aware of the duties of the position from the start.

Paul adds that the church is the great defender of truth, and the magnitude of the position cannot be minimized.

Instructions to Timothy (1Timothy 4)

Paul tells Timothy that the Lord said that in later times many would abandon their faith and start following many deceiving spirits. Demons will teach them things, and their teachings would come from liars that had consciences that had been seared just like a hot iron.

They forbid people to marry and ordered them to avoid certain foods that God had created to be eaten by the true believers. Paul adds that everything God has created is good. Nothing of His should be rejected but received with thanksgiving since it has been consecrated by prayer and God's Word.

He tells Timothy to let his sisters and brothers know about these things, and that would make him an outstanding minister of the Lord. Paul says physical training does have some value, but that godliness has the most value because it promises the present life and life ahead.

Paul says, "Teach these things and make sure everyone learns them well. Don't let anyone think little of you because you are young. Be their ideal. Let them follow the way you teach and live. Be a pattern for them in your love, your faith, and your clean thoughts. Read and explain the Scriptures to the church. Preach God's Word.

Be sure to use the abilities God has given you through his prophets when the elders of the church laid their hands on your head. Put these abilities to work. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone may notice your improvement and progress. Keep a close watch on all you do and think. Stay true to what is right, and God will bless you and use you to help others.