

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

### The First Epistle of Paul to Timothy

Tuesday Bible Class

September 19, 1994

Intro: The Pastoral Epistles are 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. It is generally believed that Titus was written between 1 and 2 Timothy, shortly before Paul's death, making 2 Timothy the last of the Pauline Epistles. They are called pastoral because they have to do with the work of pastors.

It is believed that Paul was imprisoned on two occasions, and that he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus between the two imprisonments, and that 2 Timothy was written during his second and last imprisonment, and shortly before his death. This would place the writing of 1 Timothy in 66 or 67 A. D., according to Henry Alford in his commentary called, The Greek New Testament, Vol. III, p. 100). It is impossible to know the exact date, but we know in general the circumstances. and this date, give or take a year, seems to have the approval of most conservative scholars. A. T. Robertson puts the date a year earlier--65 A. D.--but he indicated that his date was only probable. We do know that the writer was the Apostle Paul, and that he was writing to his "son in the faith" (1 Tim. 2:2), that he left Timothy in Ephesus to minister there, and that he probably wrote to Timothy from Macedonia. See 1 Tim. 1:3. Beyond these details, our main interest in the epistle is its message.

In the arrangement of Paul's epistles in the NT, 1 Timothy is the first epistle written to an individual. It is followed by a second letter to Timothy, then a letter to Titus, and finally a letter, written earlier, to Philemon in Colosse. The books are not arranged chronologically, but probably, like the letters to the churches, more according to size, with possibly some attention given to their general importance.

The epistle is not easy to outline. The message of the epistle seems to be built upon four main themes which recur throughout the epistle. Sometimes they stand alone; at other times they are mixed together. The four themes are:

- 1) The first has to do with what Paul said to Timothy for his own benefit. There are many examples of this, but one that is very clear is found in 1 Tim. 4:12-16.
- 2) The second concerned specific instructions to the people of the church in Ephesus. An example of this is 1 Tim. 2:8-15.
- 3) Third, Paul seemed to be greatly concerned about false teachers and what they were teaching. See 1 Tim. 1:3-7.
- 4) Fourth, Paul's references to himself and to his own ministry. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:12-17.

Now let us look at the outline of the book in the hope that it will enable us to understand it better.

I. Paul's address to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:1, 2).

II. A charge for Timothy regarding false teachers (1 Tim. 1:3-11).

III. Paul's testimony and praise to the Lord for putting him into the ministry (1 Tim. 1:12-17).

IV. Paul's charges to Timothy concerning his ministry (1 Tim. 1:18-6:21).  
A. Concerning the ministry as a warfare (1 Tim. 1:18-20).

- B. Concerning prayer in the church (1 Tim. 2:1-8).
- C. Concerning women in the church (1 Tim. 2:9-15).
- D. Concerning church leaders (1 Tim. 3:1-13).
- E. Personal words for Timothy (1 Tim. 3:14-6:21).
  - 1. The subject: Timothy's behavior in the house of God (1 Tim. 3:14-16).
  - 2. His ministry to the people concerning false teachers (1 Tim. 4:1-11).
  - 3. For Timothy's personal life (1 Tim. 4:12-16).
  - 4. Timothy's ministry to groups within the church (1 Tim. 5:1-6:21).
    - a. Older men, older women, widows and elders (1 Tim. 5:1-20).
    - b. A parenthesis: A charge to Timothy to minister without partiality (1 Tim. 5:21-25).
    - c. Servants, masters--rich men (1 Tim. 6:1-10).
    - d. Another parenthesis: A charge to Timothy not to get involved in the very sins he would expose (1 Tim. 6:11-16).
    - e. More warnings to the rich (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
    - f. A final word for Timothy--an exhortation and a warning (1 Tim. 6:20, 21).

It is very clear from this epistle that, while Paul was concerned about the false teachers and false teaching, and burdened for various groups in the church, yet nothing is more obvious than his concern for Timothy! Paul wanted the church to be protected against error, and he wanted the people in the church to know how they were to live in the church and outside of the church, but he knew too well that the servant of the Lord was always at risk in the Lord's work. The servant of the Lord can very easily be pulled down into sin by the very sins which he opposes. Therefore, Timothy, like all other servants of the Lord, needed to be constantly on his guard, and not so busy trying to help others that he would forget to keep His own life and fellowship with the Lord in order.

As evidence of this look at the following verses: 1:2 (his prayer for Timothy), 18-20; 2:14, 15; 4:6-8, 12-16; 6:11-16, 20, 21.

There is much in this epistle for all of you who are in churches, but please don't overlook the instruction which runs through this epistle, that the people in any church need to be faithful in praying for their pastor. "And so much more as ye see the day approaching." But it is also instructive for pastors that they must remember that they are in a warfare, and we need to be just as much on our guard as our servicemen are when they invade a foreign country. We live and work in Enemy territory, and he relentlessly seeks the downfall of every true servant of the Lord. He can do it with various temptations to sin--the temptation to adultery, or to pride, or to seek money, and on and on. And yet we can be thankful that the Lord always causes us to triumph in Christ. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. The One Who is in us is greater than he that is in the world. But we need to remember always that our victory is in Christ, not in ourselves. Therefore, how important it is that all of us keep walking with the Lord, growing in Him, trusting in Him, and continually humbling ourselves before Him.

September 20, 1994

Now let us turn to the exposition of the epistle. Our first point is:

I. PAUL'S ADDRESS TO TIMOTHY (1 Tim. 1:1, 2).

It was the opinion of John Calvin that Paul wrote this epistle more for the people of the church at Ephesus in those days than he did for Timothy. And he said this because so much of the epistle is devoted to things which Paul would not have mentioned if Timothy had not been a younger servant of the Lord and in the position that he had by Paul's appointment. In those days, as well as in our own, there would have been those who would not have been inclined to submit to the leadership of a younger man. Calvin stated it this way, speaking of Timothy:

He was a young man, not yet clothed with that authority which would have been sufficient for restraining the headstrong men that rose up against him. It is manifest, from the words used by Paul, that there were at that time some who were prodigiously [strongly] inclined to ostentation [claiming to be great themselves in order to impress others], and for that reason would not be willing to yield to any person, and who likewise burned with such ardent ambition, that they would never have ceased to disturb the Church, had not a greater than Timothy interposed (Vol. XXI, p. 13).

And so this is the reason that the Apostle Paul began his epistle as he did. There was no need to impress Timothy with his apostleship, but it was important that the people of the church understand that what Timothy was seeking to do with the people in the church, was not his own idea, but that he was carrying out the will of God as it had been revealed to His servant, the Apostle Paul.

This is why it is important for all of us, especially pastors, to get their direction from the Word of God. God's ways are not only different from our ways, but they are infinitely higher and better. And if we want to have the blessing of God, we are not to do His work in our way, but in His way. And so, although we have seen similar addresses in Paul's other epistles, let us note carefully how he began this epistle.

1:1 There was no higher human authority in the first century church than for a man to be able to claim truthfully that he was "an apostle of Jesus Christ."

In the book of Ephesians where Paul was teaching the doctrine of the church, he said this:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,  
but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;  
And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:19, 20).

The apostles were not infallible in themselves, but they were uniquely empowered by divine authority, and in their writings spoke with the full authority of God Himself, preserved from error of any kind. This is why we speak of the inerrancy of Scripture. It is not only the greatest foolishness, but absolutely sinful, to guide the people of God and the work of God by anything but the Word of God.

However, Paul was not an apostle by his own appointment (as he would explain more fully a little later in chapter 1, verses 11-17). And here he said that it was "by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope."

"The commandment of God" -- This word "command" has a military emphasis,

and probably ties in with Paul's reference to the work of the Lord as a warfare in 1:18. The word also suggests, according to Thayer (p. 343), not a temporary appointment, but a permanent, life-long assignment. Paul did not apply for an apostleship, nor was his place in the church his own decision. He was commanded by God to take this position.

We see this also in the way the Lord called the other apostles. He said, "Follow me." See Matt. 4:18-22. They were fishermen, but suddenly they were drafted for the work that the Lord had for them to do.

We have largely lost sight of the call in these days when the work of the Lord has become so man-centered. Christian schools and often even mission boards will call in their psychologists, or give psychological tests, to determine if people are qualified for the ministry. Oftentimes the men who seem most unlikely to be in the ministry, are the very ones whom God calls and uses in a remarkable way. The ministry is not a profession which we choose on our own; it is a calling, a divine calling. While Timothy was not an apostle, he was called by God nevertheless to do the work of the Lord.

Notice, too, that the commandment that Paul received to be an apostle, came not just from God, but also from the Lord Jesus Christ. While this did not add to the commandment, yet it would serve to impress upon the people Timothy was working with in Ephesus that the Apostle Paul had the highest possible authority for writing what he wrote and for doing what he was doing in the work of the Lord.

"God our Saviour" -- In many passages, like this, God is spoken of as our Savior; in others, like 2 Tim. 1:10, Jesus Christ is called our Savior. But there is no conflict here. All three Persons of the Godhead are involved in our salvation, and can rightly be called our Savior. The Father chose us, the Lord Jesus died for us, and the Holy Spirit seeks us and draws us to Christ. And inherent in such a term as "God our Saviour" is the plain teaching that salvation is not a work of man, but a work of God. And it also shows that even before he was an apostle, he was a saved man. No man belongs in the ministry in any position who is not, first of all, a saved man.

"And Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope" -- The Lord Jesus Christ not only gives us our hope, but He is our hope. In Col. 1:27 Paul spoke of our Lord as "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Hope in Scripture has to do with the final completion of our salvation when we will be conformed to the image of Christ.

Note: "our Saviour...our hope." How different this is from saying a Savior, or even the Savior. Paul was evidently claiming that God was also the Savior of Timothy, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was Timothy's hope, too.

And so we have in this first verse not only the authority of the Apostle Paul, but also a statement of guarantee that God is not only our Savior, but that He, through Christ, guarantees the completion of that work -- for both Paul and Timothy whom Paul mentioned in verse 2.

1:2 In verse 1 we have the Apostle Paul identified as the writer; in verse 2 we are told that the original recipient of the letter was a man named Timothy. That is why this epistle bears his name. Although Paul and Timothy had worked together for many years, this was Paul's first

letter to Timothy which had been written under the full supervision of the Holy Spirit.

Paul called him, not an apostle, but "my own son in the faith." This means not only that Paul was absolutely confident of Timothy's salvation, but also that Paul was the one who had led Timothy to Christ.

We first learn about Timothy in Acts 16, and, without going into all of the details of trying to follow his life in the years that followed, we can say that he was associated very closely with Paul throughout Paul's ministry from that time on. He not only accompanied Paul in his missionary travels, but was with Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome, and 2 Tim. 4:9, 11, 13, and 21 indicate that we have strong evidence for believing that he was with Paul during his second imprisonment, and very likely even to the time when Paul was martyred. But I don't know of any tribute given to Timothy in or out of Scripture which can compare with what Paul said about him in his letter to the church at Philippi. Truly God had done an amazing work in Timothy's heart, and, humanly speaking, Paul could not have accomplished all that he did if he had not had the faithful assistance of his beloved Timothy.

(Read Phil. 2:19-24.)

It must have been a great comfort to the Apostle Paul that, when it came time for him to die, there were men like Timothy and Titus who were coming along to carry on the same way in the work of the Lord. We, too, can be thankful that the Lord's work has never died because God has continually been raising up those who will faithfully take the place His servants when they are called home.

We often speak of words like we have in the latter part of verse 2 as a greeting--and they certainly are that. But they are more than a greeting; they are a prayer: "Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." Here we see that God is not only "our Saviour" (v. 1), and Jesus Christ "our hope," but God is "our Father" and Jesus Christ "our Lord." And if "grace, mercy, and peace" come to us from Them, we can be sure that the supply is inexhaustible! Let us look at these words for a moment.

Notice in 1 Timothy 1:13, 14 mercy precedes grace in our salvation, but apparently in our lives as Christians we need grace and then mercy. However, in the light of Heb. 4:16 we can't press that order too strictly.

"Grace" -- Since this is grace, not to a sinner who needs to be saved, but to a sinner who has been saved, we must take this in the light of Paul's description of grace in 2 Cor. 12:9. Grace for a believer means strength, strength which becomes even greater as we face our limitations and weaknesses. Cf. Phil. 4:10-13.

And we need to remember, as Archbishop Trench pointed out in his Synonyms, grace also has to do with guilt. We as the people of God and as the servants of our Lord (including Paul and Timothy), are never completely free from sin. And so, while we need to come to the Lord for the grace of strength, we also need to come to Him for the grace of forgiveness.

"Mercy" -- Mercy and grace are very similar words, but mercy has to do with the miseries which we experience in life as well as in the work of the Lord. Our trials often make us miserable. Our troubles, whether

physical or spiritual, cause us to be miserable. The work of the Lord is never easy. As we have seen, and will see again, it is warfare. Often the troubles remain, and that is where we need the mercy of God.

"Peace" -- Peace follows grace, and peace also follows grace and mercy, as here in verse 2. When God blesses us with His grace and with His mercy, peace follows. It is God's ministry to His people that brings peace. There is much that militates against our peace. Calvin spoke in the quotation which I gave you of those in Ephesus who had their own agenda about the work of the Lord, and who would be inclined to oppose Timothy as an outsider and as being younger than they were. In the language of 1 Tim. 4:12, they were inclined to "despise" Timothy because of his youth. Such a situation tends to disturb the peace. But since grace and mercy comes from "God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord," there can be peace. God does not leave His servants alone. He is always with them. His purposes cannot fail. His will is going to prevail. But it is only as we continue to trust the Lord and keep our minds stayed upon Him (cf. Isa. 26:3, 4), that we can have peace. No child of God, and certainly no servant of the Lord, can do without the grace, mercy, and peace which is promised us from our God and heavenly Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is a prayer which we can pray every day for every believer we know. And we can be thankful when people pray this prayer for us. We can't go wrong when we pray the prayers of Scripture.

STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 1:3-11

September 26, 1994

The outline:

- I. Paul's address to Timothy (1:1, 12).
- II. A charge for Timothy regarding false teachers (1:3-11).

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Intro: It is from this verse that we assume that 1 Timothy was written by Paul from Macedonia to Timothy whom he had left in Ephesus. Guy King, in his excellent, but brief, commentary on 1 Timothy which he called, A Leader Led, gives a short summary of Paul's relationship with Ephesus. Let me read you what he has written:

That company of true believers had been begun through the work of Paul, and was further fostered probably by the apostle John, and by such other teachers as Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla. Paul devoted a good deal of care to, and had a real affection for, these Ephesians. He paid them a brief visit at the end of his Second Missionary Tour, Acts xviii. 19; at the outset of his Third Journey he spent no less than three years with them, Acts xix. 1; xx. 31. On his last visit to Jerusalem, he stopped awhile at a seaside town [Miletus], thirty miles from Ephesus, that the church leaders from the great city might run down for a farewell meeting with him--a most affecting occasion, as verses 36-8 show (pp. 17, 18).

It is easy to trace the spiritual beginning and decline of the church in Ephesus when we consider three NT books: Ephesians (which probably was the epistle Paul wrote just before 1 Timothy), 1 Timothy, and our Lord's letter to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2. Ephesians, although it was probably a circular letter addressed to the same church as the book of the Revelation was, nevertheless, being addressed first to Ephesus, shows that the work of Ephesus was spiritually very strong because of the nature of the teaching which Paul did in that book. When we come to 1 Timothy we see Paul's great concern for the inroads of false doctrine, and the need the church had for strong, spiritual leadership. Then we see in Revelation 2 that the church at Ephesus had lost its first love. Thus the history of the work in Ephesus began on a very high note, but then started down, and went down more, and today there is no city of Ephesus, nor is there a church.

This ought to make us stop and think about the Lord's work today, and especially the Lord's work in the churches that we are a part of. Most of us have lived long enough to see a great decline in the spiritual life of churches. Not only have we seen how false doctrine has taken over in many of the major denominations, but evangelical churches have become more and more superficial. We seem to be more concerned about entertaining people than we are about teaching them. And so you know as well as I do that it is becoming harder and harder to find Bible teaching churches, where the ministry of the Word of God is the main thing. We use all kinds of methods to get people into our churches. We apparently have forgotten that the most powerful and life-changing instrument we have is the Word of God. As the Word is taught, people are saved, and then built up in the faith and in their walk with the Lord.

We have known for several weeks that we were going to have to leave this building. I was touched recently when a family, now attending Hillcrest Chapel, came to our morning service. It was about three weeks ago. And I learned afterwards that the wife wanted to come one more time before we

left because it was in this very room that, listening to the Word of God, she was saved. I didn't know anything about it at the time, nor did I learn about it for several years after, but God was at work through the Word. God doesn't need our gymnasiums. He doesn't need our rock music. He doesn't need our showmanship in the pulpit. We are commissioned to preach the Word, trusting God to use it in changing the lives of people and preparing them for heaven. That was Paul's concern as he wrote to Timothy. And he wasn't long in getting to the subject as we can see from verse 3 here in chapter 1. Let us take his message to heart because we have seen how the church has turned away from the exposition of the Word of God.

Perhaps we could take a statement from Proverbs and apply it to what is going on in many of our churches today. I am thinking of that statement which we find twice in that book, once in Prov. 14:12, and again in Prov. 16:25:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,  
but the end thereof are the ways of death.

The church is not to be a political institution, nor a health club, nor an entertainment center. The church is to be a place where people can learn about God, and learn the truth about themselves, where they can be saved, and then where they can grow in the Lord. Let's not be deceived into thinking that we can take another way different from God's way, and still see the blessing of God. God's ways and our ways are not the same, and we are kidding ourselves if we think that God is going to adopt our ways just because we think that we have some ideas that we feel are better than His. If Paul were concerned about the church in his day, how do you think he would feel about the church today?

But let us see what Paul told Timothy.

1:3 As much as Paul needed Timothy, and as much as he loved having Timothy with him, when he left for Macedonia, across the Aegean Sea from Ephesus, he "besought" Timothy, he urged him, he implored him, to stay in Ephesus, as he said, "that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

He was to "charge" those who were teaching anything contrary to the apostle's doctrine, to stop it immediately, and never to do it again!

"Charge" -- This is a prominent word in this epistle, appearing in chapters 1, 4, 5, and 6.

The word charge or charged appears seven times in the first epistle of Paul to Timothy in the English text, and eight times in the Greek text: twice in chapter (1:3, 18), once in chapter 4 where it is translated "command" (4:11), (three times in chapter 5 (5:7, 16, 21), and twice in chapter 6 (6:13, 17). Six of them are from the same root (1:3, 18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17) are from the same root. The words in 5:16, 21 are not only different from those six, but different from each other as well. We will deal with them as we come to them.

I won't take the time to distinguish between these words, but will do that as we come to them. The word we have here in verse 3 means not only to tell them not to teach other doctrines, but to command them not to teach other doctrines.



Last week we saw that there is a military emphasis in this epistle. The Lord's work is like a soldier engaging in warfare. The Devil is our chief Enemy, but he has many assistants. It is not unusual to find them in our churches. They were in the church at Ephesus. Paul knew that we can't compromise with error. We have to face it, and root it out. False doctrine leads to false practices. When people get away from the Word of God, even in some small degree, they come up with practices and methods which are foreign to the Word and will of God. So this was an order!

Cf. 1 Tim. 6:3.

There are lot of people in our churches today who have some very weird ideas about God. Lucille was talking to Frank and Carolyn on Sunday afternoon, our son-in-law and daughter, and Frank said about some people he is teaching that they don't understand the sovereignty of God. They have never been taught about the majesty, the glory, the greatness of our God. And so the God they talk about is just what they want him to be. They don't know that He is holy. They don't know that He is Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things. Their God is a God Who is available to help us when we ask him to, but He either can't or won't interfere in our lives, and he is just hoping that we will do the right things.

Many church people today have weird ideas of man. We talk about the need for self-love, when we all have an overdose of that, and it is self-love which is destroying us. Pride is eating us up. We don't really sin; we just have our weaknesses which people have to accept, but we must not try to get people to believe anything as positive and authoritative as the Gospel. God is not going to shut us out of heaven if we do our best.

And with a false doctrine of man, you can't have a true Gospel. We have to explain Jesus Christ in a different way. The Cross becomes the place where a martyr died, but not a Savior.

And all of these things have a small beginning, but it does not take long for them to grow, and they soon take over.

Let us make sure that we get our doctrine from Scripture. There we will find that the truth is God-centered, not man-centered. We find that it is unchanging because God is unchanging, and man is still the worthless sinner that he always has been, in need of the transforming work of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The message of the Bible is not a popular message, but we are not to seek to be popular. We are to be faithful. And when people are saved, then they are going to want the Word of God, and they won't be satisfied with anything else.

So we need to know the truth, and then teach it. This is our charge. All of us ought to ask God to enable us to serve Him in such a way that when the time comes for us to die, we can say what Paul said in 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. (Read.)

But let us move on and see what Paul was concerned about.

1:4 He first mentioned "fables." These are mentioned four times in the pastoral epistles: Here, 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14. (Read them.)

The only other time the word is used in the NT is 2 Pet. 1:16.

If doctrine is not the truth, it is a fable. If we turn away from the truth, there is only one way we can go--to fables. But people can teach fables as though it were the truth, and that is when it becomes especially dangerous. And if the Scriptures are used to support their fables, the damage done can be that much more extensive.

Archbishop Trench, in his Synonyms of the New Testament, marks three stages through which historically this Greek word has passed. Once it was good, but as Trench said very significantly, "in a world like ours the fable easily degenerates into falsehood" (p.338). "In a world like ours," yes, the trend is always downward. Generation, or creation, soon led to degeneration, and degeneration gets more degenerate all of the time, and can only be reversed by regeneration.

September 27, 1994

The Greek word for fable (μῦθος) is the word from which we get our English word myth. At the first it meant little more than a spoken word. It was closely related and similar to the word λόγος, and other words like it. Then it moved away and meant what we would call a mythical story with some great moral principle. Finally, the word came to mean that which was not only false, but evil. And Trench made this comment by way of contrasting μῦθος and λόγος:

It will thus be seen that λόγος and μῦθος, which begin their journey together, or at all events separated by very slight spaces, gradually part company, the antagonism between them becoming every stronger, till in the end they stand in open opposition to one another, as words no less than men must do, when they come to belong, one to the kingdom of light and of truth, the other to that of darkness and of lies (p. 339).

"Endless genealogies" -- Not justifiable and worthwhile genealogies, such as those of the patriarchs in the OT, and even of our Lord in Matthew and Luke, but genealogies of mythological beings, the forerunners of Theosophy and Gnosticism. These do nothing but raise a lot of additional questions, and never settled anything. They do not build up anyone, but, instead, tear them down, and moved them farther and farther away from the truth. They never produce godliness. They are never profitable, but dangerous and damaging to the souls of men.

Note: Theosophy is a modern religious sect which is based upon mystical insight into the nature of God and divine teachings. It is a fable. There were several groups of Gnostics. They were early "Christian" sects who refused to be limited to the Word of God. The Gnostics believed that we had to get beyond matter if we were ever to find salvation. Some did not consider Christ to be a real person, but some kind of an emanation from God. (These explanations have been taken from The American Heritage Dictionary.)

So Timothy was charged by the Apostle Paul to see to it that these worthless speculations came to an end among the people of God. It is true with doctrine as it is with people that "by their fruits ye shall know them." See Matt. 7:20. Contrary to what even many professing Christians say, true doctrine is not harmful, but very, very profitable, because, among other things, it leads to godliness.

Paul spoke here of "godly edifying." Thus he introduced another word and idea which is prominent in the pastoral epistles: godliness. It de-

scribes what every true believer must have, an attraction for God, and a desire to be like Him. Strong in his Concordance speaks of it as indicating an affinity for God. Note the passages where we have this emphasis. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:4; 2:2, 10; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5, 12; Titus 1:1; 2:12.

"Edifying" -- The true servant of the Lord is going to want to strengthen the believer's affinity toward God. His ministry is to be God-centered, not man-centered. He is to be concerned about pleasing God first, not man. But the fact is that when God is pleased, man is blessed and finds the greatest good for his own life. Such objectives that will glorify God and be of spiritual benefit to the believer are not the objectives of the false teachers.

1:5 The object (the end, the purpose, the goal) of the charge which the Apostle Paul had given to Timothy, three results to be expected from the teaching of the truth to the people of God are "charity [love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." This is good to know because it allows us to test the effect that the Word of God is having upon our own hearts. If we cannot see these three results, there is something very wrong, and calls for deep self-examination in the presence of God Himself. Let us note what the three are:

First, "love out of a pure heart." This would mean love in the two directions our Lord spoke of when He was asked what were the two great commandments in the Law (see Matt. 22:34-40): love for God first, and then love for believers (but also a different attitude toward even the people of the world). It is love which is inward and genuine, with "pure" motives, a love which is a manifestation of the work of the Spirit in the heart.

Second, "a good conscience."

Do you remember how Paul defended himself before Felix in Acts 24? Tertullus had accused Paul of having sinister motives in the work that he was doing. Among other things, in response, Paul said this:

And herein do I exercise myself,  
to have always a conscience void of offence toward God,  
and toward men (Acts 24:16).

Paul said about the false teachers in Galatia (Gal. 4:17),

They zealously affect you, but not well;  
yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

False teachers always have some hidden agenda. They may want your money. Or they may want to count you among their successes. Or they may simply be seeking to get you away from someone else. But they aren't serving in a good conscience. It was not really to benefit the people to whom they had gone.

Paul, on the other hand, was not fighting Judaism. He was not seeking to put an end to temple worship. He knew, and, what is even more important, God knew, that his motives were, first, to please God in the proclaiming of the truth, and, second, to see people saved and then built up in their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then we come to Paul's third purpose: "And of faith unfeigned." This is a true faith, not one of empty pretense. One of the greatest sorrows in the ministry is to find out that the faith of a certain person, or people, is not true, but false--not genuine at all.

Guy King made this comment about "faith unfeigned":

The real thing. There is, of course, a spurious faith; there is a misplaced faith; there is a so-called faith which consists only in the mental acceptance of a doctrine, or in the mere recital of a creed. Mental acceptance is, of course, so far as it goes, a good thing; but it does not carry us far enough. James ii. 19 is sufficient to show us that: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe ..." The apostle here means something more than this--not merely the belief about Him, acknowledging His historicity; nor merely the believer in him, acknowledging His ability; but the belief on Him, resting on His saving quality--as in Acts xvi. 31, for instance, or John iii. 16, G., or a score of other passages. It is that same "unfeigned faith" which Timothy himself possessed, following the example of mother and grandmother (A Leader Led, pp. 21, 22).

Paul was not only concerned that people would have this "faith unfeigned," but that it would be growing. It is the business of the servant of the Lord to see that the people of God are nurtured on all three of the points that Paul mentioned here in verse 5.

Let us examine our own hearts in the light of what Paul said here to Timothy.

But, sad to say, this is not always the case with the people of God, or with those who profess to be the people of God, as Paul went on to point out in verse 6 and 7.

1:6 Some have "swerved," missing the mark, turning aside from the truth of the Word of God. They have erred! Paul used this word again in 1 Tim. 6:21, and also in 2 Tim. 2:18.

When people swerve, it is not that they remain the same, or neutral, but they turn to fables; here, "unto vain jangling." This is empty talk. They try to make it sound good, but it means nothing because it is not the truth.

How much there is of this empty talk in the world today. Christian Science is empty talk. Mormonism is empty talk. Talk about worshipping Mary, the mother of our Lord, is empty talk. But so is a lot that is being said today in our churches. Make sure that you are listening to the Word of God, not somebody's ideas which are really a departure from the world. Psychology and the wisdom of man have a large place in the pulpits today, as they always have. Remember what Isaiah wrote in Isa. 8:20:

To the law and to the testimony;  
if they speak not according to this word,  
it is because there is no light in them.

And then he continued in verse 7.

1:7 It is amazing how zealous people can become when they have turned away from the truth, and yet claim that they continue to teach the Word, but have been given greater insight into the truth. The most dangerous kind of teaching is that which a person does when he or she uses the Word, but is not teaching the truth. And yet they claim to be teaching the law of God. Paul said here that they not only don't understand what they are teaching, but they really don't know what they are trying to

prove ("affirm"). And yet people will believe them anyway.

The heart of man is such that he has a greater affinity for error than he does for the truth. And this is our problem. This is why we must pray that we will have our hearts opened by the Holy Spirit to the truth of the Word of God, and that we will then be able to detect when a person is not teaching the truth, but teaching error. The best way to be able to spot error is to have your heart saturated with the truth of the Word of God. Our Lord said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Paul was saying here in verses 6 and 7 that false teachers are truth twisters! And we must not be deceived by people just because they use the Bible. The big question is, How are they using it? How thankful we can all be for those who have guided us, and helped us, in understanding what we know about the Word of God. But let us remember that we don't know anything the way we ought to know it, and so we need to be growing in our understanding of the truth, and in the practice of the truth.

October 3, 1994

1:8 The mention of "the commandment" in verse 6 suggested, or at least left the impression, that the false teaching which Paul was so concerned about had to do with the Law, the Law of Moses. Any doubt about that is cleared up in this verse. This was the cause of most of the difficulty in the early church between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews wanted the Gentiles to be obedient to the Law, and the emphasis made by the Jews was so strong that they made obedience to the Law necessary for salvation. So this meant that they were opposing the true Gospel of the grace of God.

An example of the kind of teaching that was being done by the Jews, is found in Acts 15:1, where we read,

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren,  
and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses,  
ye cannot be saved.

This, of course, was a serious error.

In Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia, he faced this question. Among other things, this is what he had to say in Gal. 5:2-4:

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised,  
Christ shall profit you nothing.  
For I testify again to every man that is circumcised,  
that he is a debtor to do the whole law.  
Christ is become of no effect unto you,  
whosoever of you are justified by the law;  
ye are fallen from grace.

And then in verse 6 of that same chapter in Galatians, Paul added,  
For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing,  
nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.

Now here in 1 Timothy Paul said, "But we know that the law is good." It came from God, and so it has to be "good." We must be careful not to despise the Law. When people speak of the Law today, they usually have reference to the ten commandments. When the Jews spoke of it in our Lord's Day and in the days of the early church, they had in mind the observing of the Sabbath, and the observation of the holy days and ordinances such as circumcision. They were using it unlawfully. That is, they were not using it as the Lord intended for it to be used. And so

that made it bad. Whenever even the truth of Scripture is not used as God intended for it to be used, then it is not only misused, but abused. And what we need to do is to go back to the Word of God to find out what is use was meant to be.

For example, baptism is a Biblical doctrine. But when it is made a condition for salvation, it is abused. It becomes a work, and that then makes it contrary to the grace of God. I believe that every Christian should be baptized, and I am convinced from Scripture that the Scriptural mode is immersion. I have baptized many people throughout the years of my ministry. But I have tried to make every one of them understand that if they are not saved before they are baptized, their baptism means nothing. In fact, if an unsaved person is put down in the baptismal waters, it is not baptism. Baptism is meant to tell that God has already done something in our hearts, and we are baptized as a witness of that glorious fact.

Now let us talk about the Law. Was the Law ever meant to save? Will there be anyone in heaven who is there because they kept the Law? Certainly not! Salvation has always been "by grace...through faith," and "not of works, lest any man should boast."

What, then, was the purpose of the Law?

Paul had two answers for that question. The first is in Gal. 3:19. (Read.) The words, "it was added because of transgressions," mean that the Law was given to put restraints upon people--speaking especially of the ten commandments. But it was also to be seen in the many sins for which the death penalty was the punishment. Those people who today say that the death penalty is not a deterrent for sin, don't know what they are talking about. They are arguing with the plain teaching of the OT. It was God's purpose that the Law would restrain His people from sin until "the seed should come to whom the promise was made," but after Christ came the people of God were no longer under the Law as a schoolmaster. See Gal. 3:24, 25.

But in the book of Romans Paul taught that there was another purpose for the Law, and he expressed it in these words found in Rom. 3:20: "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." Man knows in his heart that there is right and wrong, that is, that God has established a moral standard for this world. Unbelievers know that it is wrong to kill, wrong to steal, wrong to commit adultery. But, so they would be without excuse, God said in the Law, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"; "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image"--so idolatry was forbidden. And on and on through the Law.

We are "not under the law." That does not mean that the Law has no meaning for us today. It means that the Law is not our rule of life. If it were, we should be meeting on the Sabbath, which is Saturday. We should be offering animal sacrifices. We should be observing the feast days. We should make sure that everyone is tithing. And on and on we go! These were all of the things which led up to the coming of Christ, and the people of God in the OT were obligated to do those things, and hundreds of other things as well.

1:9 But the Law still has a purpose. However, we must use it "lawfully," that is, we should use it according to God's purpose for the Law today. What is it? To make people know that there is such a thing as sin, and what sin actually is! It is not for the righteous man. It is

not made for the man who is seeking to please God. If all people were righteous, God would never have given His Law.

Then who is the Law for?

Paul here in verses 9 and 10 listed at least fourteen kinds of people for whom the Law of God has a very important message, a message of condemnation and of judgment. Let us notice who they are. And notice that these identify what is still sin in God's sight even in this twentieth century. Matthew Henry called this a "black roll of sinners" (Vol. VI, p. 808-2).

1) "The lawless" -- Lit. this word is made up of two Greek words which actually mean, no law. It describes a large segment of our population today. They despise law of any kind. They don't want anyone to tell them what to do, and, if anyone tells them what to do, or not to do, they refuse to listen to them. And, of course, this means that such a person lives in constant violation of the Law--the Law of God, and the laws of the land. The Law was made for him, to make him wake up, to strike the fear of God into his heart.

2) "The disobedient" -- A lawless person probably does not even take the time to find out what the Law is, but "the disobedient" knows what it is, and yet refuses to obey it. He is unruly, uncontrolled and out of control. This is the kind of a person who loves anarchy. He refuses to conform to what the law requires.

3) "The ungodly" -- We are going to learn a great deal about godliness in the pastoral epistles. It has already been mentioned in verse 4 of chapter 1. There I pointed out that a godly person is one who has an attraction for God, and who wants to be like God. Remember that Strong described a godly person as one who has "an affinity for God." He is attracted to God. But the ungodly person will not worship God, nor be submissive to Him. He really doesn't want to have anything to do with God. We see the glory of the Gospel because in Rom. 4:5 we read that God justifies the ungodly, and in Rom. 5:6 we read that "Christ died for the ungodly." This is pure grace!

4) "Sinners" -- This is what you would expect from an ungodly person, and probably why Paul put the two together. An ungodly person is always a sinner, that is, "devoted to sin," one who takes delight in sinning, one who is "pre-eminently sinful, especially wicked" (Thayer, p. 31). The more a person turns away from God, the deeper he goes into sin.

5) "Unholy" -- A holy person is one who recognizes that God's law, or God's will, stands before and above all other laws, and that no law of man can possibly nullify that which God has declared to be moral and right. Thus a country which establishes laws to permit what God rejects, is an unholy nation. And a man who violates the laws of God is an unholy person. This is a most serious condition to be in. Men are being unholy when they take the Lord's Name in vain. They are being unholy when they violate the marriage bond. They are being unholy when they engage in homosexual activity. And the list of sins goes on and on. The Law was made for people like this.

6) "Profane" -- This is the word which is used to describe Esau in Heb. 12:16. He despised that which was holy and good, knowing what he was doing. The word in the Greek conveys the idea of stepping upon a threshold, meaning moving into another area of life altogether. Judas was a

profane person. It is more than doing wrong when you know what right is, but it is really casting your lot with that which is wrong. John Owen said in his book on Hebrews (Vol. VII, p. 295) that a profane person is rarely granted repentance unto salvation. Esau was rejected even "though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:17).

7) and 8) "Murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers" -- Under the Law even striking one's father or mother brought the death penalty. See Exodus 21:15. How much more serious, then, would it be to murder either or both of them. The Law says that we are to honor our parents, to obey them. But it shows how deeply rooted sin is in our hearts when a person will kill those whom he should love the most, and to whom he owes his very existence.

9) "Manslayers" -- This is any murderer, one who takes the life of another. It is not unusual in a city like Portland to hear of one or more homicides every day. There are thousands of them every year in our country, and we surpass a combination of some of the greatest nations in western Europe when it comes to this crime. And yet these criminals are not punished as they should be. One of the first laws declared in Scripture has to do with this sin. Cf. Gen. 9:6:

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:  
for in the image of God made He man.

1:10 The list continues in this verse.

10) "Whoremongers" -- This is a male prostitute, but it has also come to mean a fornicator. And it is so translated in several NT passages. It is one who sells himself for immoral purposes, or one who engages in illicit sexual intercourse. This is another place where our country needs to hear the Law of God. It has become so common, even in high places, that it has actually become an accepted way of life. Even children are sinning against the Lord in this area.

11) "Them that defile themselves with mankind" -- These are sodomites, homosexuals, lesbians. This word appears also in 1 Cor. 6:9 (the last expression--the translation of one Greek word), "abusers of themselves with mankind." We are told today that this is an alternate lifestyle, and many teachers insist that this should be present as an option to our children. Politicians are afraid to stand against it. And yet, as far as Scripture is concerned, it is impossible for people to go any lower than this. Romans 1:26 speaks of it as "vile affections," and indicates that when sodomy becomes prevalent in any society, it is an indication that that society is under the judgment of God. Cf. Rom. 1:26, 27.

12) "Menstealers" -- This is not only a kidnapper, but a slave-dealer. Lit. it is one who catches another by the foot. Either way it is one who barter with human lives. Thayer indicates that the term describes also the men who would steal slaves from someone else in order to sell them.

13) "Liars" -- Man by nature is a liar, and, if he is permitted to do so, he will make this a way of life. Psa. 58:3 tells us,

The wicked are estranged from the womb:  
they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

A liar is an unfaithful person. Prov. 20:6 says,

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness:  
but a faithful man who can find.

We always have to guard ourselves against dishonest people. It is rampant



in the business world. Everybody is trying to get their hands on your money. People profess to be what they are not. Men lie to their wives, and wives lie to their husbands. And the same is true of parents and children. We all need a refresher course on what the Bible says about lying because God is the One with Whom we are going to have to give account some day.

14) "Perjured persons" -- This is a person who will be lying and yet under oath will swear that he is telling the truth. He will swear that he didn't do something when he did.

We have a similar list in 2 Tim. 3:1ff.

Paul did not say that this was an exhaustive list; in fact, he said that it wasn't. But he has given us enough to warn us very specifically about things which take place in the world every day, and yet things which the Word of God has declared to be sinful in God's sight. And if they are sinful in God's sight, they are going to bring His judgment, if not now, then surely hereafter. These, and everything else like them, are "contrary to sound doctrine."

William Hendriksen, in his commentary on 1 Timothy, points out that the Greek word for "sound" is the word from which we get our word hygienic. And he went on to explain that "sound doctrine" is that which promotes good spiritual health. And if we are to be strong spiritually, then we need to stay away from sin. And it is the Word of God which keeps reminding us of that which He has declared to be sin.

1:11. The Law and the Gospel are not opposed to each other. They both condemn sin. As the Lord indicated in speaking to "a certain lawyer," the Law says, "This do, and thou shalt live." But no man, woman, or child can keep the Law. So the Law does not save us, it condemns us. And this is where the Gospel becomes so precious. It tells us not to save ourselves by our own works, but to seek salvation through the One Who met and satisfied all of the Law's demands, and who put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

The Gospel also tells us that we cannot save ourselves, but it tells us that Christ can save us. And this is the message that was committed to Paul's trust. And by the grace of God he was determined to be faithful to that trust. Paul did not feel obligated to give men what they wanted to hear, but what God wanted them to hear. He was not called to please men, but to please God.

Note that he spoke of God as "the blessed God." This is saying that God is a happy God. And saying this in the context of what Paul had written, this meant that it was God's great pleasure to provide salvation for all who would trust in Christ. And Paul had found that what pleases God, is that which pleases those of us who seek to serve Him. Show from the Law that men are sinners, but show also from the Gospel that God saves sinners.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 1:12-17

October 10, 1994

Intro: After Paul addressed this letter to Timothy in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, then he proceeded to charge Timothy to charge those who were teaching false doctrines, to stop such teaching. We learned in verses 3 through 11 that the false teachers were misusing and abusing the Law so that people were not being forced to see themselves as sinners. Consequently the people were not being convinced by the Law that they were sinners. The Law was being used, but it was not being used "lawfully," that is, the way God intended that it should be used, to show sinners their sin. And with this misuse of the Law there was a serious neglect of the Gospel of the grace of God. Paul mentioned this in verse 11. And he spoke of his ministry as a work with which he had been entrusted.

This prompted Paul to speak of his own call to the ministry, and we have this in the six verses which follow: vv. 12-17. It is a testimony expressed in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord Jesus Christ because it was through Paul's personal dealings with our Lord that he was not only saved, but called into his life-work.

1:12. Although the ministry had caused the Apostle Paul constant grief and sufferings beyond what his brethren had experienced, yet his heart was full of praise to the Lord Jesus Who had put him into the ministry. And he spoke of the Lord as the One Who had "enabled" him for the work that he had done. This means that the Lord empowered Paul. It was in the Lord that he found the strength to stay with his calling and to follow through in all of the troubling circumstances that he had had to face. Through the years from that time to this, the ministry has had many quitters. Paul was not a quitter.

Undoubtedly one reason that he had persevered was the conviction that God had put him into the ministry. No man has the right to put himself into the ministry. That is God's prerogative. Matthew Henry, in his commentary, called attention to Jer. 23:21, where we read these words:

I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran:

I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

The ministry today is often looked upon as a profession to be chosen rather than a calling to be received from God. In ordaining men to the work of the ministry, one question ought always to be answered: "Do you believe that you have been called of God into the ministry?" And every servant of the Lord needs to ask, in the light of the Word of God, "Am I being faithful in doing the work of the Lord in His way, not my own?"

But how are we going to handle that part of the verse which says that Paul was put into the ministry "for that he (the Lord Jesus) counted me faithful"?

The Lord certainly doesn't choose us for service, any more than he chooses us for salvation, by what He sees in us. And so it was not that the Lord chose Paul because he knew that Paul would be a faithful servant. Paul would have failed just as miserably as others have failed if the Lord had left him to himself. Calvin seems to have the right idea when he said that by this statement Paul was indicating that the Lord had called him with the intention of using him. Paul got his strength from the Lord, and the Lord was going to see to it that Paul would remain faithful to the end.

So the Lord doesn't put us into the ministry on the basis of what he sees

we can do for Him. He calls us, commits Himself to strengthen us, and then, on that basis, He uses us and keeps us faithful to our calling. Those who fail in the ministry either have never been called, or, if they have been called, they have forgotten that their strength to be faithful is only in and from the Lord.

These are important truths for all of us to remember. Paul was not only grateful to the Lord Jesus for putting him into the ministry, but he was grateful that the Lord had sustained him, and blessed him, and used him in that ministry.

1:13 The calling and usefulness of the Apostle Paul was all the more amazing when we remember what he was when the Lord saved him. Here Paul mentioned one side of his life before he was saved, but there was also another side that we need to remember to put it along side of what he mentioned here in verse 13.

I am thinking of what he said in Philippians 3. Since we have been thinking about the Law here in 1 Timothy 1, let us see what Paul said about himself and the Law in Phil. 3. He said in verse 5 that he, "as touching the law" was "blameless." This did not mean that Paul was not a sinner, but it means that he was what we might call (quote) "a good sinner" (unquote). He sought to be very careful in observing the Law of God. He even said that "touching the righteousness which is in the Law," he was "blameless.) This meant he observed all of the feast days. He tried to be what God wanted him to be. He thought of himself as a good person. He was trying to keep all of the commandments. It is true that he was responsible for the imprisonment and even deaths of many Christians, but he did it thinking that he was serving God.

Years ago, a man by the names of James Conant wrote a tract entitled, Why All Good People Will Be Lost. And he pointed out in that tract nobody can be good enough to be saved and go to heaven, but that often our desire to be law-abiding, to pay our debts, to help people, to be faithful to our spouses, to be concerned about our children, to be honest and hardworking --that all of this keeps us from seeing that we are just as lost as the criminal who sits on death row. We can be thankful that we haven't done what he has done, but our goodness does not save us. In fact, it is an affront to our Lord because many people do what they do thinking that God will look upon all of the "good" things which we have done, and then open the doors of heaven to us.

Paul forgot all of those things that he had been doing for God when he met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. Instead, he realized that he was three things which nullified all of the good that he might have done:

- 1) He was "a blasphemer."
- 2) He was "a persecutor."
- 3) He was "injurious."

What is a blasphemer? A blasphemer is one who speaks abusively and disparagingly against another person. Paul had been a blasphemer against the Lord, and against the Lord's people. A blasphemer will seek to destroy another's character.

"A persecutor" is one who pursues people intending to harm them, and even to kill them. Paul persecuted Christians because of what they believed. He, of course, felt that they were wrong, and that he was right.

When he said that he was "injurious," he meant that he was out to cause those who believed in Christ all of the trouble that he possibly could, even unto death. He was an oppressor.

Paul hated Christ, but he professed to love God. And yet, according to Phil. 3, his zeal, which surpassed that of his peers, was expressed in doing away with Christians whatever it might take. He didn't know that the only way to God is through Christ. He did not know that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He did not know that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised and long-awaited Messiah. And so he went on to say in our text, "But," after all of the bad things that he had done, "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

"Ignorantly" -- He did not know what he was doing. He didn't know that the Jesus Whom he hated was the One Whom God found all of His delight--the God that he professed to love and to be serving. Paul's unbelief had blinded him, and had kept him from entering into the truth of God's Word.

Calvin said, "By willingly acknowledging his unworthiness, he magnifies the greatness of the grace of God" (XXI, 35).

Does this mean that if a person sins knowingly that he cannot be forgiven. Possibly. Do you remember that warning given in the book of Hebrews? Listen to how it is stated. Let me read Heb. 10:26-29.

Think also about what the writer of the book of Hebrews had to say about Esau. Cf. Heb. 12:14-17.

See also 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

Judas Iscariot is a prime example of one who knew the truth, turned against the Lord, and never came back. In John 6:66 we read those ominous words, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." They departed from the Lord, and they never come back!

This is what makes me fearful for people who have known the Gospel, and perhaps have professed to believe in Christ, but afterwards turn away and are content to live without God and without the people of God. We can't tell the Lord how to work, nor can we know how He will choose to work in individual cases, but from what these Scriptures tell us, and what we often see happening around us, we have to realize that it is a very serious thing to know the Gospel, and then to turn away from it. Paul did not know it. He did not know who Jesus of Nazareth was. He was like the multitudes around the Cross who were blaspheming the Lord, but for whom the Lord prayed when He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Or think of what Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 2 about "the princes of this world." (Read 1 Cor. 2:7, 8.) Hearing the Gospel makes people responsible to the Lord to a great degree. We need to warn people not to delay in trusting Christ when the Gospel is presented to them. These are very solemn words which we have seen in the Scriptures.

But let us go on in our text.

1:14 Paul obtained mercy (v.13), and here he mentioned "the grace of our Lord." Though Paul's sin was great, God's grace was greater -- "exceeding abundant"! Cf. Eph. 3:20, 21. This was not only true, but it is true of every sinner who ever has come to Christ for salvation. The person who stays away from Christ because he thinks himself to be too

great a sinner, does not understand grace.

"With faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" has to refer to what was in the Lord which led to His manifestation of grace to Paul. So "faith" here would be like "truth" in many OT passages; it speaks of the faithfulness of our Lord, just as "love" here is our Lord's love for Paul, not Paul's love for the Lord. We only love the Lord because He first loved us. The Lord was faithful to His eternal purpose for Paul even though Paul had sinned so greatly before the Lord saved him.

1:15 What a lot of wonderful theology there is in this verse! The whole Gospel is here in "only eight Greek words," as Geoffrey Wilson pointed out in his commentary (p. 31). We have the pre-existence of Christ, His incarnation, and His mission. It is a true saying, and a saying that is worthy to be received by all--all kinds of men (women and children) everywhere. There is no other true message of salvation. And Paul, conscious of the grace of God in his life, and that he was a changed man--no longer a blasphemer, nor a persecutor, nor injurious, was indicating here that if God could save him, then nobody was too great a sinner to be saved. Paul not only admitted that he was a sinner, but that he was the worst of sinners! A true child of God never objects to being called "only a sinner saved by grace." In fact, the longer we know the Lord, the more we marvel at His grace to us.

Guy King pointed out in his commentary (p. 33) that there are five faithful sayings in the Pastoral Epistles. And he gave the names which were suggested long ago by John Wycliffe:

- 1) Here, concerning our life's salvation.
- 2) In 1 Tim. 3:1, concerning our life's service.
- 3) In 1 Tim. 4:9, 10, concerning our life's suffering.
- 4) In Titus 3:8, concerning our life's sanctification.
- 5) In 2 Tim. 2:11, concerning our life's secret.

Concerning the faithful saying here in verse 15, Mr. King had this to say: This is no fancy of a disordered imagination, no figment of a distraught emotionalism; it is known to be true in the experience both of Paul and of Timothy, shown to be true in the case of every real believer since... Was there ever a story like this--of such wide appeal, of such vast circulation, of such engrossing interest, of such compelling power? (pp. 32, 33).

October 11, 1994

"Of whom I am chief" -- Several commentators have pointed out that Paul did not say, of whom I was chief. It is wonderful to be saved, to be forgiven, and to be cleansed from our sins. But the more we know about God, and about the Lord Jesus Christ, and about the Holy Spirit, the more conscious we are that we are still sinners, and the more it pains us to remember what we have done as sinners to displease our gracious God. Paul abhorred all of his sin, but none was greater in his sight as a child of God than his unbelief.

It is interesting to note the statements which Paul made about himself during his ministry. In 2 Cor. 11:5 he said that he "was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles." In 1 Cor. 15:9 he wrote, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." In Eph. 3:8 he referred to himself as "less than the least of all saints." And here, in our text, as "the chief of sinners."

In his old age, Dr. B. B. Sutcliffe, the man who brought Dr. Mitchell to Portland, told Dr. Mitchell, "Jack, I have never seen myself to be as great a sinner as I do now." I think that is the attitude of most of God's "senior saints." We regret intensely that we have ever done anything sinful in the sight of the Lord.

1:16 In verse 13 Paul stated the first reason as to why he had obtained mercy and was saved. Here he gave a second reason as to why he had obtained mercy from the Lord.

"In me first" suggests that Paul was not the only trophy of the grace of God, because there were those before him in time, and after him as well, but in none was the "mercy" and "longsuffering" of the Lord Jesus Christ more apparent than in the life of the Apostle Paul. The Lord Jesus turned one of His greatest enemies into one of His dearest and best friends.

I don't see anything in the NT which would lead us to believe that people prayed for the salvation of Saul of Tarsus. Maybe some did, but no reference is made to it. He was undoubtedly looked upon as such an enemy of Christ and the Gospel that he was beyond salvation! But the Lord saved him, not through the testimony of anyone else, but in those sovereign way in which He stopped Saul and the road to Damascus, and changed his heart forever! The Lord Jesus made Saul "a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

The Greek word for "pattern" is ἐνδειγμα. The Lord was making an example out of Paul, not an example that he would get what he deserved for his sin, but that there was mercy and forgiveness in Christ, and because of Christ, for even the chiefest of sinners. Undoubtedly the story of the Apostle Paul has encouraged many great sinners to trust Christ, believing that if the Lord would save Saul of Tarsus, there was hope for them also.

The longsuffering, the patience, of the Lord is truly amazing. Look at our world today. Look at our country. Look at what is going on in our city, and at what continues to go on in our city, and you have to marvel at the longsuffering of the Lord. Better still, let each of us look into his own heart, and there we will see all of the reasons that we need for marvelling at the amazing grace of God. John Newton marvelled at God's grace, and that is why he wrote, Amazing Grace.

1:17 One writer has said that we are not surprised to find a doxology here; this is where we would expect it. And what Paul has written in these verses should prompt us to join him in praising our Lord Jesus Christ for His infinite mercy and grace.

Paul addressed the Lord Jesus here as "the King." As a King, our Lord is recognized for His absolute sovereignty. He saves whom He will, and no one can challenge him as to what He is doing. He can break down the hardest heart, and cause the chief of sinners to bow before him, all resistance gone. Our Lord is King over all, King of kings, and Lord of lords. He made the great King Nebuchadnezzar eat straw like an ox until he learned that "the most High ruleth in the affairs of men," and that no one even has the right to bring our Lord to account for the things that He does.

He is the "eternal" King. That is, He always has been King, and He always will be King. Our Lord had no predecessors, and He will have no successors. He is without beginning, and without ending. Nations fear their

present kings, and yet wonder if the next king will be better, or worse. Not so with our Lord. He is the King now, and will never be replaced. Believers know that now; a day is coming when that fact will be as clear as crystal to all. The word "eternal" suggests that our Lord is the King of this age.

Paul also spoke of Him as "immortal." We have learned in the first word, "eternal," about our Lord's position. Here we learn about our Lord's Person. He does not grow older and weaker like we do because He is immortal. This is what Isaiah was saying in Isa. 40:28a:

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard,  
that the everlasting God, the LORD,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth,  
fainteth not, neither is weary?

But our Lord is also "invisible." He cannot be seen, and yet He is present everywhere! It is only possible for believers to look "at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4:18). Moses "endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). And so can we! How the Lord can have a body, and yet be invisible, and how He can be here and everywhere else, are mysteries of the Godhead which we will not be able to understand fully until we are in glory. But we can believe these truths, and act upon them, and so profit from them.

Finally, Paul addressed our Lord as "the only wise God"; some MSS say, the only God. Before Paul was saved He felt that Jesus of Nazareth was a blasphemer because He claimed to be God, claimed to be Deity. But afterwards he understood about the oneness of the Godhead, and that our Lord is and always has been a part of that Godhead--AND THAT THERE ARE NO OTHER TRUE GODS.

And it was to this "only God," our Lord Jesus Christ, that Paul ascribed all of the glory and honor for His salvation. In Paul's case there was no human instrument used that even greater glory might be given to our Lord. But even when God sees fit to use another, as He did with Paul, it is still true that to our Lord "be honour and glory for ever and ever" -- unto the ages of the ages. "Amen."

The "amen" means that this is the final word. It can never change. When we take the credit for our salvation, or for the salvation of someone else whom we may have brought to Christ, we are seeking to rob Him of the glory which rightfully belongs to Him, and only to Him. Let us remember this, and may the praises of the Lord be continually in our hearts and expressed day after day by our mouths.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 1:18-20

October 17, 1994

Intro: Here the Apostle Paul got back to the subject he departed from in verse 11. He was charging Timothy (v. 3), but also mentioned his own charge from the Lord in v. 11. In verse 18 Paul, as an apostle, was passing on that charge to Timothy. Timothy was being entrusted with a message as well as with a ministry. And he was to exercise it in Ephesus.

Paul's charges to Timothy continue from 1:18 on to the end of the epistle. It would probably be more accurate to say that it was one charge with several parts to it--concerning prayer, women in the church, church leaders, and so on.

This begins the fourth and last division of the epistle:

#### IV. Paul's charges to Timothy concerning his ministry (1:18-6:21).

And in the last three verses of chapter 1 we have:

##### A. Concerning the ministry as a warfare (1:18-20).

1:18 The Christian life is a warfare, as Paul taught in the latter part of Ephesians 6, and in other parts of his epistles as well. We all have experienced the conflict that we are involved in because we belong to the Lord. It is not a warfare against flesh and blood (although people are involved in this warfare), but it is a battle against spiritual principalities and powers. And it is equally true, and in some respects even more so, that the Christian ministry is a warfare. The servant of the Lord is the object of Satanic attacks because of his position, but he is also to wage an aggressive warfare against Satan, the Enemy of God and of everyone who knows God. He is in a battle to preserve the truth in the preaching and teaching that goes on in the church. He is in a battle to guard his own walk with the Lord, as well as to assist the people of God in their understanding of the truth and in their obedience to the Lord. And it is all a constant battle. We can never give up. And when we are gone, others have to step in our place and continue the battle.

Paul, as an apostle, had the authority to give this charge to Timothy. And Timothy must accept this as a charge from the Lord Himself. He was entrusted with the work that God had called him to do. Timothy could not help but feel the burden and the responsibility that was placed upon him, and he was to perform his duties in Ephesus as a servant of the Lord with a divine commission.

"According to the prophecies..." -- Cf. 4:14. We don't know what those prophecies were, but evidently there was some confirmation from the Lord that Timothy was to be in the ministry, much like what the Holy Spirit said concerning Barnabas and Paul, as recorded for us in Acts 13:2. In those days the Spirit of God worked in ways which He did not continue to do in such an obvious way after the apostolic age was past and the NT church was established, and the NT completed.

One thing this does seem to indicate is that if God has called a man into the ministry, that call should be confirmed by others who are equally convinced. But it also indicates that even though a man has been called by God to the work of the ministry, he must, by his own diligence and faithfulness, "war a good warfare." Nobody can do this in his own strength, but every servant of the Lord must accept his calling with



responsibility, and seek the strength from the Lord that he needs to be faithful.

"War a good warfare" -- Cf. 1 Tim. 6:16. In Paul's second epistle to Timothy, he told Timothy what Timothy surely must have known when he said, "I have fought a good fight." See 2 Tim. 4:7. It is interesting that in all of these passages Paul spoke of the fight, or the warfare, as "good." It is a good warfare because of the victories that are won. And a "good fight" is one in which the soldier-servant fulfills the work that the Lord has given him to do, and does it in the way that is pleasing to the Lord. As it was with Joshua, so it is with us; the Lord Jesus Christ is our Commander-in-Chief, and we all take our orders from Him. Cf. Joshua 5:13-15.

Cf. also Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:1-4. And see 2 Cor. 10:1-6.

As Matthew Henry indicated in his commentary on 1 Timothy, there is much opposition in the work of the Lord, and many discouragements along the way, but we must be strong in the grace of God and persevere even when the conflict is the greatest. This is waging a good warfare.

Notice, before we leave this verse, that Paul, speaking of the predictions concerning Timothy's ministry, was "by them" to "war a good warfare." Calvin said, "What is there that either ought to give, or can give us greater cheerfulness than to know that God has appointed us to do what we are doing?" (Vol. XXI, p. 44). There may be defeats and setbacks along the way, but our victory is guaranteed by the Lord Himself.

1:19 This verse also helps us to understand what is involved in engaging in a good warfare.

"Holding faith" -- Or we could translate it, having faith.

Calvin said that he thought that this meant sound doctrine, but I don't think that that is the main idea here. It is certainly true that we cannot "war a good warfare" if we depart from the truth of the Word of God. But I have found that it is easier to stand for sound doctrine than it is to be trusting the Lord continually. And so it seems to me that Paul was saying that if Timothy were to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ he must be careful to see that nothing disturbed his confidence in the Lord. Many things happen in the Lord's work which try our faith. One is unanswered prayer. Another is, and usually related to unanswered prayer, unfruitfulness. Our faith is tried when we see people turn away from the church, and often from the Lord. Or we see people who have their own agenda, and who seem to know little or nothing about the importance of walking and working and waging warfare together.

We all need to guard ourselves against unbelief, or not trusting the Lord. Some of the worst battles I have had in my life as a Christian have been right here. This is why it is important for us to continue in the Word, not reading it just so we can have something to give to others, but reading it for the strengthening of our faith. We all should be able to say like the Apostle Paul did in the midst of the storm that wrecked the ship that they were traveling on, "Sirs, I believe God" (Acts 27:25). He was "holding faith." So was Job when he said, "Thou he slay me, yet will I trust him" (Job 13:15). And the three Hebrew young men were "holding faith" when they told King Nebuchadnezzar that they would not worship his image even if they were going to be cast into the fiery furnace. This is

what they said; the words are found in Dan. 3:17, 18.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us  
from the burning fiery furnace,  
and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.  
But if not, be it known unto thee, O king,  
that we will not serve thy gods,  
nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

They were "holding faith."

When Caleb and Joshua came out of the promised land with a good report even when others said that we can't overcome the people of the land, they were "holding faith." Many other examples could be cited from Scripture as well as from the history of the church since the Scriptures were completed. We need "the shield of faith" in order to quench "all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

"And a good conscience" -- Cf. 1:5; 3:9; 4:2. A good conscience means that we must be what we appear to others to be. A hypocrite does not have "a good conscience." But we do not have to be a thorough-going hypocrite in order to have a bad conscience. When we exhort others to do what we are not doing, that is not a good conscience. When we do not feel toward others the way we make them think that we feel, that is not a good conscience.

Paul here linked a bad conscience with those who have "put away concerning faith."

Although in most instances I believe that the KJV is a good translation, yet there are places where it could have been improved. This is one verse where the translation could be clearer.

I mentioned a moment ago that I differed with Calvin's interpretation of "faith" in the first part of this verse. I do not think that Paul was speaking there about sound doctrine; as I have brought out, I think he was talking about the need for us to be trusting God. But here, the second time he used the word "faith" I am sure that he was talking about the Word of God, sound doctrine. Why do I say that? Because the Greek does not just say, "which some having put away concerning faith," but it says, which some having put away concerning THE FAITH. THE FAITH is a NT expression for doctrine, sound doctrine, the teaching of the Word of God.

Paul was saying here that under no circumstances can the servant of the Lord ever put away, or reject, the teaching of the Word of God. We may all have trouble understanding certain truths, but if we put it away, if we reject it or any part of it, not only can we have a good conscience, but we are headed straight for "shipwreck." There have been plenty of men who started out preaching the Word, who through scholarship, or through trouble of some kind, have started rejecting the truth, and spiritually they have landed on the rocks! And it is not the usual thing for men to recover from a shipwreck.

1:20 Paul gave two illustrations of men whose lives were shipwrecked because they departed from the truth of the Word of God. One was Hymenaeus; the other was Alexander. Both of these men are mentioned in 2 Timothy. Cf. Hymenaeus in 2 Tim. 2:17 and Alexander in 2 Tim. 4:14. There is some question as to whether or not this was the same Alexander, but a strong likelihood that he was the same. (Read 2 Tim. 2:16-18 and 2 Tim. 4:14, 15.)

They were guilty of blaspheming God. And Paul did with them what he did to the man in 1 Cor. 5 who was involved in an immoral relationship with his stepmother. There is no way to calculate the tragedy that can take place when anyone turns away from the Word of God. Obviously these men failed to hold their faith in God. They failed to trust the Lord. They violated their consciences in doctrine as well as in their personal lives. And the results were disastrous.

What a solemn warning this was for Timothy, and yet it is a warning which every servant of the Lord needs to have, and needs to remember. We must always be alarmed when we find our confidence in the Lord is beginning to slip away. We must judge hypocrisy in any form whenever we are aware of it in our lives. And under no conditions should we allow ourselves to reject any part of the Word of God.

And so you can see that while Timothy, according to chapter 1, was to take a stand against false doctrine, yet his primary concern as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ was to see that in his own heart he remained true to the Lord. Even though Timothy was a young man, he was to be an example of what he wanted the believers in Ephesus to be. What he preached to others, he needed to preach to himself first! And the same is true for each one of us.

This is a lesson for us as parents and grandparents. This is a lesson for pastors and church officers and Sunday School teachers and for everyone who names the Name of Christ as Savior. The church today would be far different from what it is if we had only take words like these to heart.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 2:1-8

October 24, 1994

Intro: The Pastoral Epistles contain the very best information and guidance for any man entering the ministry. But it is important for the people of God in general to know the will of God for the ministry so that they will not be misguided. The fact that these three epistles are included in the Scriptures is proof of that fact.

The work of the Lord in Ephesus which had experienced such blessing from the Lord in its beginnings, was going through difficult times when Paul wrote to Timothy. We can see what confidence the Apostle Paul had in the Lord concerning Timothy for him to leave Timothy with such a great responsibility.

We can see from chapter 1, beginning with verse 3, that Paul was greatly concerned about the false teaching that was going on. This takes us down through verse 11.

Then, evidently thinking about Timothy's ministry, Paul looked back upon his own ministry and marveled at the grace of God in using him in the ministry. And so we have verses 12 through 17 in which we might say that Paul was digressing, and yet, in another sense, he wasn't digressing. It always should be amazing to us to see how God uses men, men who in and of themselves are not worthy of such a high and holy office.

In the last three verses of chapter 1 Paul addressed his words to Timothy himself. They have to do with Timothy and with his own relationship with the Lord. Paul spoke of Hymenaeus and Alexander who had turned away from the truth, and who had experienced spiritual shipwreck. And Paul did not want that to happen to Timothy. Partially for Timothy's sake, and partially for the work of the Lord, the next point of major importance had to do with a call to prayer. In our outline it is the second point upon section IV. in the outline:

#### IV. PAUL'S CHARGES TO TIMOTHY CONCERNING HIS MINISTRY (1 Tim. 1:18-6:21). B. Concerning prayer in the church (1 Tim. 2:1-8).

You can look at the last three verses of chapter 1 and see that Paul's primary concern was for Timothy as he was engaging in the spiritual warfare that was taking place in Ephesus.

2:1 The word "therefore" ties in this exhortation with what Paul had said in chapter 1, and probably with the last three verses of the chapter. It is impossible to say too much about the importance of prayer in the lives of believers and in the ministry of the church. The ministry of the Word of God and prayer go hand in hand. When we fail to pray we certainly have lost sight of the awesomeness of the work that the Lord has given us to do. The Devil will do all that he can to corrupt the teaching, and he will also do all that he can to destroy the teacher. That is why we and our work need to be bathed in prayer.

We can see from the mention of Paul's prayers in Scripture that he was a man given to prayer. We can also see from his teaching about prayer how greatly he believed in its importance, that the work of the Lord cannot really proceed with blessing unless there is prayer, much prayer.

He gives these words about prayer as an exhortation. And I would remind you that this is an apostle's exhortation. That would give it special

importance. This meant that the following words needed to be taken as from the Lord Himself. We know from the Gospel records how important prayer was in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, as has been said many, many times, if He needed to pray, how much more do we need to pray, and do we need others who will pray for us.

An exhortation is an appeal, or a call for prayer, but here it should be taken as a command. In warfare those who are in command do not just make suggestions which those under them can take or leave. They issue commands, and a successful battle can only result when every soldier carries out the commands. Here Paul was writing in the context of spiritual warfare.

Paul mentioned four kinds of prayer: "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks." These must come "first of all."

Remember how jealously the apostles guarded their time for prayer and the Word. In Acts 6 where the work of the Lord in Jerusalem was growing, and the Grecian widows were being neglected, the apostles had the church choose men who could help with that work. But for themselves they said,

It is not reason that we should leave the word of God,  
and serve tables...

And then they went on to say what their priorities were:

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer,  
and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:2b, 4).

Paul would have agreed wholeheartedly with them.

What can we say about the four kinds of prayer? Paul certainly must have had four things in mind. Matthew Henry explained it this way: "supplications for the averting of evil, prayers for the obtaining of good, intercessions for others, and thanksgivings for mercies already received" (VI, p. 811). There is no question about the "intercessions" and the "thanksgivings," but there might be a different idea about the "supplications" and "prayers."

Calvin said that "supplications" speaks of definite petitions, and Thayer added that those petitions have to do with personal needs, the needs of the one praying. The Greek word translated "prayers" is a general word expressing prayer to God with the added idea of devotion, or worship.

So we could say that these four kinds of prayer are:

- 1) "Supplications" -- the petitions of the one praying for his or her own personal needs. This could also include the confession of sin.
- 2) "Prayers" -- a general word for all kinds of prayer, but with a special emphasis on devotion to the One to Whom we pray. In other words, worship.
- 3) "Intercessions" -- prayers we offer for others.
- 4) "Giving of thanks" -- for blessings received: spiritual, physical, material, social.

And "first of all" speaks of that which is of the chiefest importance, that which should be given the highest priority. We all have many demands upon our time. It is easy for us to let other things crowd in so that our time of prayer is cut short, or crowded out altogether. The ministry of the Word is never the blessing without prayer that it is with prayer. And the priority that we give to prayer is not to be determined by the answers we receive, nor by the evidence that it is profitable. Many times we pray day after day for the same people or the same petitions without seeing any

change. In fact, some times things even get worse. That is when we need to see grace from God to continue because it is always easier for us to faint than it is for us to continue in prayer.

It would seem from Paul's words, "for all men," that he was indicating not only that we should pray for all kinds of people, but that even in the petitions that we bring for ourselves, our thoughts should be that we might be a greater blessing to others, "to all men" (or women, or children). We are to pray for believers, and for unbelievers. We pray for people we know, and for people we don't know. We pray for people who are near, and for people who are afar. Everybody within the circle of our lives is to be a potential subject for prayer. The more we think of a verse like this, the greater is the horizon which is to be covered by our prayers. The Holy Spirit burdens us for certain ones, and He will guide us in our praying. Often we don't know what to pray for as we should, but it is not necessary for us to know specific needs in other people's lives. The Lord always knows the needs, and he even sees needs which we have never seen in our own lives, nor have we seen them in the lives of others for whom we pray.

In the light of 1 Timothy 1:17, let us remember that when we pray we are coming to "the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). And let us remember the words also of John Newton in his great hymn on prayer:

Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such, none can ever ask too much.

2:2 Among the "all men" for whom we are to pray are "kings, and for all that are in authority."

October 25, 1994

This would include presidents and governors and mayors in our society because he went on to say, "and for all that are in authority." Paul did not say that we need to be in favor of what they do. In fact, in Paul's day there was probably a strong tendency not to pray for kings, etc., because, as Calvin pointed out, "all the magistrates who existed at that time were so many sworn enemies of Christ" (XXI, 51). Most of the time we are not in favor of what they do. They ignore God. They approve that which God disapproves. They seek to magnify themselves and their power. Therefore, much of our praying for them is that they will be restrained from doing evil.

It is good for us to review what the Scriptures say about our leaders in government.

Paul made it clear in writing to the church at Rome, the seat of the mighty and dreaded Roman Empire, that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). This does not mean that He approves of them; it simply declares that the sovereignty of God extends even to the highest authorities in any nation. Furthermore, Paul called Caesar (and all other governmental authorities) the ministers of God. Again, this does not mean that God approves of what they are doing, but it does mean that they are responsible to God, more than to the people, for the way they lead whatever nation they might be the head of. Usually wicked leaders, or weak leaders, are a judgment of God upon the nation that they lead. But their wickedness makes it all the more important that believers keep them in their prayers. There is nothing in Scripture about civil disobedience, nor about organizing revolts against the government. What we are seeing

so much of now in our newspapers and TV about protesters at abortion clinics and the like, is definitely displeasing to God. We are not to fight one wrong with another wrong. We are to pray! Troubles like this are meant to turn us to the Lord. They do not give us the right to take the law into our own hands.

It ought to be an encouragement to us to read in Proverbs 21:1 that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." And so God not only sets up kings, but he controls them once they are in power.

Earlier in Proverbs (8:15, 16) King Solomon himself had written,  
By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.  
By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

When the Psalmist was reviewing the history of Israel in their journey from Egypt to Canaan, he wrote,

He [the Lord] suffered no man to do them wrong:  
yea, He reproved kings for their sakes;  
Saying, Touch not mine anointed,  
and do my prophets no harm (Psa. 105:14, 15).

And a few verses later the Psalmist attributed to the Lord Joseph's release from prison.

Psalm 136 is not only a great Psalm exalting the mercy of the Lord, but it is a Psalm exalting the sovereignty of the Lord. For example, we read these words in verses 17 and 18:

To Him which smote great kings:  
for His mercy endureth for ever.  
And slew famous kings:  
for his mercy endureth for ever.

And then the Psalmist went on to speak of Sihon of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan.

When Daniel sought to know both the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its meaning, and the Lord answered his prayer, He praised the Lord like this:

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever:  
for wisdom and might are his.  
And he changeth the times and the seasons:  
he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:  
he giveth wisdom unto the wise,  
and knowledge to the that know understanding  
(Dan. 2:20b, 21).

We are coming up to a national election. Let's not be surprised if the Lord gives us leaders who are worse than we have now--UNLESS WE PRAY! This is not a time for protests, but for prayer. That verse which became so popular during World War II needs to be revived: 2 Cor. 7:14. It was a promise given to the people of God in Israel, but it surely has its application to us today. Our only hope as a nation is that God again will have mercy upon us. But let us never forget that God is in control! And, therefore, we should make it our business to make sure, by His grace, that we are pleasing Him even though everything in our country is so displeasing to Him.

Why do we pray for our leaders?

"That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and hones-

ty." Let us examine Paul's words here.

I don't need to tell you that life in the United States is anything but "quiet and peaceable." We are so close to anarchy that we should never pray without seeking the mercy of God upon our land. History teaches us that nations get so bad that God moves against them to destroy them from the face of the earth. We are so sure that it can't happen to us, but history teaches us not only that it can, but that it will! That is, unless we repent of our sin and forsake our sin. The Word tells us in Prov. 28:13,

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper:

but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Thus, there are two things that we as the Lord's people can do to help our country:

- 1) We need to make sure that our lives are pleasing to God, both inwardly and outwardly.
- 2) We need to be faithful in praying for our leaders, that God will show His mighty hand for them when they do what is right, and against them when they do what is wrong.

In the context of what Paul was saying, I agree with Guy King who wrote in his commentary on 1 Timothy, which he called, A Leader Led, that "Paul is not speaking here not of individual, but of national well-being" (p. 42). Of course we all know that conditions in our country have a direct bearing upon the quality of life which we as believers enjoy, or don't enjoy. The threat of robbery, or of murder, or of any other crime, is just as great for us as it is for anyone else unless God sees fit to protect us. So we ought to be very concerned about these words which Paul wrote almost 2,000 years ago.

Several expositors feel that the words "quiet and peaceable" have to do with God's protection upon our nation from trouble without and trouble within. There is nothing displeasing to God about having a strong army to protect us from trouble from other nations. Nor is there anything displeasing to God about having a strong police force and national guard to protect us from trouble within. The trouble arises when we trust in our armed forces and in our police rather than trusting in the Lord. David had a might army, but he is the one who said in Psa. 20:7,

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:

but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

We need to remember also those important words in Psa. 127:1,

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it:  
except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

One of our young ladies is moving into a condominium. I have strongly urged her to get a monitored alarm system, which she is doing. Lucille and I were robbed several years ago, and we got an alarm system right after that. I wouldn't want to live in a house without one today. But, having said that, let me emphasize that armies and police and security people can only help us if the Lord is with us. God uses means, but nothing can protect us if our lives are not pleasing to the Lord.

"That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." We need to keep in mind that we need "a quiet and peaceable life," not so we can seek pleasures, or make money, but that we may pursue godliness and decency. Matthew Henry said that these two words speak of a right relationship with God, "godliness," worship, and a right relationship with people, decency (as King defined it). Thayer said that the



Greek word which is translated here "honesty" actually means that which entitles a person to have the respect of others.

So these two words include all that has to do with our lives: our relationship to God, which must come first; our relationships with people, which cannot be overlooked. The effect of government upon our lives is to be seen in both of these areas.

2:3 The strongest possible argument for what the Apostle Paul had just written is that it "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior." Solomon wrote in Prov. 16:7,

When a man's ways please the Lord,  
he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

It pleases God when we pray. It pleases God when we pray for our leaders and for the leaders of other countries. And it pleases God to answer our prayers by giving us "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and" decency. The chief concern of all nations and every individual within each nation should be to do that which is pleasing to the Lord. But that is particularly true about every child of God. We live in a nation where people are primarily concerned about pleasing themselves, being able to do what they want to do. And this is proof that we are a sick nation, and a nation under the judgment of God. It is only when the object of our lives is to be pleasing to God that life will be for us what God wants it to be, and what we really want it to be.

Cf. Paul's words in 2 Cor. 5:9. See also what is said about Enoch in Heb. 11:5, 6.

October 31, 1994

The mention of "God our Saviour" indicates that the object of all of our praying is the salvation of men. And this is what Paul discussed in the verses which follow.

2:4 This is a verse which has been greatly misunderstood because we fail to interpret it in the light of all that the Scriptures teach about salvation. We need to ask ourselves, Is it the will of God for all men to be saved? If it were, would it not mean that everyone would eventually be saved?

But some would say, God wills for people to be saved, but most people will not believe in Christ. If this is true then we would have to say that at least in the area of salvation, the Lord is not sovereign. He wills to do something which man will not let Him do. We certainly cannot agree with that because Paul, in Eph. 1:11, when speaking of our salvation, said that God is working "all things after the counsel of His own will." Therefore, the will of God is going to prevail in the salvation of men.

One of our problems in thinking about the salvation of sinners is that we forget what man is by nature. We need to fill our hearts with the truth which the Apostle Paul has given us in Rom. 1:18-3:20. And there are many other similar passages in the Bible. Sin has alienated man from God. Sin has made man an enemy of God. Men are not seeking God. Men do not understand their condition, and they are not interested in listening to the truth. Furthermore, according to Eph. 2:1 man is "dead in trespasses and sins." He is by nature a child of wrath. Cf. Eph. 2:3. He is in bondage to his sin and unable to set himself free. When we understand what sin has done to all of us, we should understand that if we are simply waiting

for people here and there to come to their senses and receive Christ, we are going to wait forever. Nobody ever has turned to Christ on his own initiative. We are kidding ourselves if we think that it is within the power of man to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why we pray for the preaching of the Gospel. We ask God to open people's minds, to turn the hearts of unbelievers to Himself, to give them both the willingness and the ability to trust in Christ. According to Psa. 119:130, it is God's Word entering into the hearts of people which gives them light, which gives them understanding. People are born again by the power of God using the Word of God to bring conviction and salvation to helpless and hopeless sinners.

Furthermore, we know from Scripture that God has chosen those whom He intends to save. Please turn back just a page in your Bible to 2 Thess. 2:13, 14, and let us refresh our minds about God's plan and purpose in salvation. (Read.)

Now it is obvious that He has not chosen everyone because everyone is not being saved. This is not because God is helpless to save when people either ignore Him or reject Him. God is not subject to man; man is under the sovereign will of God. But our text says that He "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." By the way, the word Paul used here for "knowledge," means full knowledge.

Well, let me say, first, that God does not take any pleasure in the death of the wicked. Listen to Ezek. 33:11. He told Ezekiel,

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God,  
I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;  
but that the wicked turn from his way and live:  
turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways;  
for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

But for His own reasons He has not chosen to save everyone, and, while we probably cannot understand that, we have to recognize that that is the teaching of Scripture.

How, then, are we going to explain this verse? It seems that in spite of what the Bible says about election, it is really the will of God to save everybody.

Let me point out where we are inclined to give this verse a false interpretation. It all depends upon how we take the word "all."

"All" can mean all without exception, or it can mean all within certain limitations. For example, let me take you to a verse where we see its limited use: Luke 2:1. (Read.)

The decree went out from Caesar Augustus "that all the world should be taxed." That sounds like he was taxing every nation on the face of the earth. The Roman Empire was very extensive, but it did not include all nations without exception. This verse means that Caesar Augustus sent out a decree throughout the Empire that every nation under his rule would be taxed. So it was not every nation in all the world (although that is one way we could interpret this verse), but it was all of the Roman world. Sometimes "all" means all without exception, but it doesn't always mean that.

Let me give you another illustration, this time from the OT--a very well-known verse: Isa. 53:6.

Isaiah said, "All we," meaning all of us. What he said here certainly applies to everybody without exception, but that is not what he was saying. He was speaking of himself and the people of God--"all we," all of us within the circle of the people of God. And then he concluded by saying that the Lord hath laid upon Him, Christ, "the iniquity of us all." Again it was all within limits. Christ went to the Cross specifically to provide salvation for those who were chosen by the Father.

But now let us look at our text again to see if there is some basis for saying that the word "all" in verse 4, and again in verse 6, is to be taken in a limited sense. And we can even include the "all men" of verse 1.

Paul had exhorted the believers under Timothy's ministry to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority." This probably meant that for most of them some new names went on their prayer lists. And then, when we get down to verse 7 we see that for some reason Paul mentioned that he had been "ordained a preacher, and an apostle, ...a teacher of the Gentiles." And he must have meant that his ministry to the Gentiles should also be on their prayer lists because he went on in verse 8 to speak of prayer again.

And so Paul spoke of praying for kings, and he indicated that they should be praying for the Gentiles. And so this would lead us to believe that he was not saying that they should feel responsible to pray for everybody on the face of the earth, but that they should pray for all kinds of people, kings, Gentiles, masters, servants, men, women, and children--all kinds of people.

Now let's read the passage adding the word kinds to each time we find the word "all." And we are doing this by way of interpreting what Paul meant when he wrote these verses. (Read 1 Tim. 2:1-8.)

Now do you see how this fits right in with what God has been doing from that day until this; in fact, He has been doing this from the beginning of time--saving all kinds of people. The Gospel is not just for the Jews, but it is for the Gentiles as well. It is not just for the poor, but it is for kings. It is not just for the elite, but it is for the common people. It is for all kinds of people. And this explanation honors God, and does not put Him in a position of wanting to save everyone while puny man keeps the sovereign God from doing what He wants to do.

I can't really tell you why God did not determine to save everyone except that that was not His will--and we have to leave that with Him. But I do know that among His elect you will find all kinds of people--the high and the low, the Jew and the Gentile, men and women, and on and on drawing whatever contrast you want. God is saving all kinds, and He is bringing all kinds of people to the full knowledge of the truth. He saved Philemon, a rich man, and He saved Philemon's slave, Onesimus. He saved Naomi, a Jewess, and He saved her daughter-in-law, the Moabite. He saved Joshua, and He saved Rahab. The Bible tells us that God has chosen to save all kinds of people.

Now what about the truth, the full knowledge of the truth, is there that God wants all people to know? The answer is in verse 5.

2:5 Among the all kinds of people you will find all kinds of gods, and all kinds of ideas about God. But the people who are to be saved need to know that there is only "one God," not two, or three, not many--

just ONE! And they need to know what kind of a God He is--that He is righteous, that He is holy, that He cannot look with acceptance upon any sin, and that no man can possibly approach Him. And it is the business of those of us who know Him to tell all kinds of people about Him. That is our job.

But if that were all that we had to tell people, we might just as well keep our mouths closed. Just to tell people about God would lead to despair. But the good news of the Gospel is that there is a Mediator. But, we must add, only "one Mediator"--not two or three or a hundred, but just One!

And so we have a holy God on the one hand, guilty sinners of all kinds on the other hand, and a Mediator in between! He is a Mediator "between God and men" (meaning men and women).

What is a Mediator?

Listen to what Matthew Henry wrote:

A mediator supposes a controversy. Sin had made a quarrel between us and God; Jesus Christ is a Mediator who undertakes to make peace, to bring God and man together, in the nature of an umpire and arbitrator, a days-man who lays his hand upon us both, Job ix. 33 (VI, 812).

God is our Judge; we as sinners are the criminals. We not only stand before God accused, but condemned. Our punishment is death and banishment from the presence of God forever. But our Judge has intervened in our behalf, not to overlook our sin, nor to excuse it. That would be a violation of His righteousness. He has intervened instead to provide us with a Mediator, One Who can make everything that is wrong, right! But in order to do his work of reconciliation, the Mediator had to become a Man. He is "the man Christ Jesus." He is God's beloved Son, the pure and holy One.

What was involved in His work as our Mediator?

2:6 "He gave himself a ransom for all," for all the elect, for all kinds of people whom God had chosen for salvation. He gave Himself for all of them. In order to be our Mediator, He also had to become a "ransom" for us. To state this truth in other words, such as we would find in the book of Hebrews, our Lord is both our High Priest as well as the Sacrifice by Whom our sins are purged and we are declared righteous before God.

"A ransom" -- This is the only time that the Greek word used here in the original appears in the NT. It speaks of a redemption price. It speaks of the price the Lord Jesus Christ had to pay in order to secure our forgiveness and salvation. He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:21. The terrible price that He had to pay showed the awful nature of our offence against God. He paid it all! He has provided us with a full salvation. We now have perfect and eternal acceptance with God through Christ, but only through Him. He is the Mediator, and there is no other!

"To be testified in due time" -- People often ask as they are learning about the sovereignty of God in salvation and especially about the doctrine of election if this does not hinder evangelism and missions. You have your answer here. This expression means that it is also a part of

God's plan for the salvation of sinners that this message be proclaimed "in due time," i.e., in its appointed times. God has not only commanded us to go to preach the Gospel to every creature, but He is the One Who sovereignly superintends and blesses the preaching of the Word of God. And it is to God's glory not only that we have a Mediator, but that we see again and again how this Gospel message is preached at the right place in the right time to reach His chosen people.

The Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman "in due time." Peter preached the Gospel to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius "in due time"--at the appointed time. You and I heard the Gospel and were granted repentance and faith "in due time."

And this is why Paul went on to say what he did about his own ministry.

2:7 It was for the purpose of reaching God's elect that he was ordained "a preacher, and an apostle," and "a teacher of the Gentiles."

When Paul said that he was "ordained," he used a very common Greek word which means to put, or to place. And he was talking about what God had done, as he had said in 1 Tim. 1:12, "putting me into the ministry" (the same Greek verb). And here you see the sovereignty of God again. Paul did not choose the ministry; God chose him and put him into the ministry. And he was there, not as a basketball player, nor as a singer, nor as a fancy communicator, nor to plan a lot of socials. He was there as a preacher, as an apostle, as a teacher.

I am amazed at some of the things that are going on in churches today. Preachers and people are showing that they do not believe that the greatest attraction we have is the Word and exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. We resort to all sorts of carnal means to attract people, and then we have to continue the carnal path in order to keep them. And then we still see people going first to one church, then to another, and then to another--wherever the biggest show is going on. Christian broadcasts now are even referred to as "shows." We grieve the Spirit of God and are going to have a lot to answer for when we stand before the Lord. Paul devoted his life to preaching, to teaching, to doing the work of an apostle (his special calling), and at the end he could honestly say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..."

On the one hand we have all of this froth. On the other hand we have men in the pulpit today who support the homosexuals, and who support abortions, and many other things that are condemned by God in His Word, and still they claim to be serving the Lord.

Paul preached and taught the Word of God, and the Gospel of the grace of God, and he said that he did it "in faith and verity." I don't know all that he meant by these words, but I know that he meant two things:

- 1) He meant that he really believed what he was preaching and teaching, and believed that the message was sufficient, under the blessing of the Lord, to reach and transform sinners into the children of God.
- 2) He meant that he was going to be true to the message--not feel that he needed more, not leaving anything out, but giving the Word as God had revealed it to His servants.

And even in making this claim he took the Lord Jesus Christ as his Witness: "I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not."

We come to the last verse in this section, and see what Paul desired in the light of the work that the Lord had given him to do, and, we might add, the work that the Lord had given Timothy to do.

2:8 Paul did not use the word for "will" here that he used in verse 4.

There he was speaking of the will of God; here he was speaking of his desire for himself in view of the work that he had to do.

What did Paul want? More money? A new building? To rearrange things in the sanctuary? None of that! What Paul wanted was PRAYER! And not just any kind of prayer. He wanted the prayer of men who would lift up holy hands to God. And you and I don't have holy hands unless we have holy hearts.

November 7, 1994

I wonder if it is not a true statement that women usually spend more time in prayer than men do. Perhaps it is because women, or ladies (I prefer that word), are by their nature inclined to be more dependent. Time also may be a factor, but if we are thinking about mothers we would have to say that no one is busier than a mother--with the care of the children, the housework that has to be done, the laundry, the ironing, the preparation of meals, and so on and on. Whatever the reason might be, even in the first century there had to be a special reason for the Apostle Paul to single out men, and to ask them to pray. "Men" is sometimes generic, meaning men and women, but not here! And I say that because Paul went on in the very next verse to speak to the ladies. So he was calling upon men to pray. Men are just as dependent upon the Lord as ladies are, but we don't always realize it. Men need to pray, and the more men who pray faithfully, and who pray as Paul instructed here, the stronger the work of the Lord will be. Paul wanted men to stand behind him in his ministry. He wanted to be supported by the prayers of men.

One of the greatest needs in the church today, and probably always has been, is for godly men, men who really walk with the Lord, who will pray. I don't know that those are right who would limit this apostolic command to prayer in the church, especially since Paul said "every where." If all the praying that a man does is the praying that he does in church, there is not much reality to his praying.

And men, this is a good time for us to ask ourselves about our praying. What place, what priority, do we give to prayer? Do we really believe that it is important for us to pray? When Paul said "every where," he was indicating that men are to be praying continually, looking for those breaks in our day when we can lift our hearts to the Lord in prayer. We men need to be praying for the work of the Lord throughout the world. Paul believed in the sovereignty of God. He believed that God was accomplishing His purposes in the world. But he also believed that God works in answer to prayer.

This passage ought to speak to every pastor, every missionary, everyone who is in the service of the Lord. We can get along without the finest buildings and the best equipment. But we can't get along without prayer because we can't get along without the Lord. If this were only impressed upon all of our hearts to the extent that we would pray more, and pray with greater faith, we would see the difference in the blessings God would pour out upon His people in their work.

"Lifting up holy hands" -- Dr. William Hendriksen was for many years a professor of NT literature at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has written on most, and possibly all, of the books of the NT, and his books are rich in their expositions of the Word of God. In his commentary on 1 Timothy 2:8 he lists the various postures which people assumed in Bible times when they prayed. And it is interesting to read over the list. Let me give you his list with at least one illustration of each one.

1) Standing. In Genesis 18:22 we read that when Abraham was preparing to pray for Lot and for Sodom, he "stood yet before the Lord." Probably in most cultures this is a token of respect, of honor, and often even of inferiority. The Pharisee in the Lord's parable about prayer "stood and prayed," but it was the prayer of a hypocrite. The publican also stood, but afar off, refusing to lift his head, and beating upon his chest. Actually he combined three postures in one. Cf. Luke 18:11, 13.

2) Hands spread out and/or lifted heavenward. One of the most famous illustrations of this posture in prayer is seen in Moses prayer for Joshua when Joshua was battling with Amalek. Cf. Ex. 17:11. Here we see man in prayer reaching out for God, and extending his hands in a attitude of faith, expecting to receive the blessing of the Lord. This is what Paul was speaking about in our text: "lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting."

3) Bowing the head. When the servant of Abraham found Rebekah and she offered to water his camels, we are told in Gen. 24:48 that he bowed his head and worshipped the Lord. Although I don't know that it is ever mentioned, it was probably in connection with the bowing of the head that people also closed their eyes--which has become the most prominent posture in our day. Why do we close our eyes? To shut out distractions so that we can concentrate more fully on the Lord and our fellowship with Him.

4) Lifting the head and eyes toward heaven. This was the way the Lord prayed the prayer we have in John 17. The first verse begins, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven..."

5) Kneeling. This was the posture the Lord assumed when He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Cf. Luke 22:41. When Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple, he knelt on the platform that had been made for the occasion, knelt before all of the people, and spread out his hands toward heaven. Cf. 2 Chron. 6:12, 13.

6) Falling face down on the ground. This is what Abraham did when the Lord spoke to him, according to Gen. 17:3. And this is what Joshua did when our Lord appeared to him as captain of the Lord's hosts. Cf. Joshua 5:14. When Elijah was up on Mt. Carmel praying for rain, he threw himself down on the ground and put his head between his knees.

We could add to Dr. Hendriksen's list, walking. Paul must have done a great deal of praying as he walked many miles on his missionary journeys. Mr. D. E. Hoste, who succeeded Hudson Taylor as the Director of the China Inland Mission, used to walk in front of their building in Shanghai, praying as he walked. The missionaries knew what he was doing, and never disturbed him. But occasionally the child of some missionary, not knowing what Mr. Hoste was doing, would come up, put his or her hand into Mr. Hoste's hand, and would walk back and forth with him. And years later when some of those children had grown to adulthood they commented on the

fact that they had never forgotten how, as they walked with Mr. Hoste, he had prayed for them. He used to spend his entire mornings in prayer, not just for missionaries of the CIM, but for missionaries all over the world.

Whatever our posture, whenever we pray we need to remember that we are in the unseen presence of the living God. Therefore, we should avoid all distractions, and should assume a position that would be fitting for the Lord God of all the earth. Often our posture indicates the sincerity of our prayers.

Verse 1 of this chapter indicates that we need to be praying all different kinds of prayers. Here in verse 8 our attention is not only focused upon men, but upon the spiritual character of the men who are praying. If a man is to have "holy hands," he must be a holy man.

Do you remember the questions that David asked in Psa. 24:3? "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" The answer:

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;  
who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,  
nor sworn deceitfully (Psa. 24:4).

How interesting it is that "clean hands" should be mentioned first! When the priests went into the holy place, they washed their hands and their feet. Hands have been responsible for the greatest evils that have ever been committed on the earth. If we have presented our bodies, living sacrifices to God, our hands have been included. In our Lord's sacrifice for our sins, perhaps there is more significance that we have ever realized to the fact that they pierced our Lord's hands and His feet. Think of the blessings that came to people on the earth through the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ. When a body was prepared for our Lord, it included hands.

"Without wrath and doubting" -- Here again it is hard to tell all or exactly all that the Apostle had in mind. But looking at these words from the standpoint of his experiences, he probably meant that in our prayers we must not be angry with those who oppose the Gospel, nor should we be so overwhelmed with the difficulties that we face that we find ourselves doubting if God will answer our prayers. He also could have meant that there must not be any trouble among us as the people of God.

It seems that there is some support in these words, "wrath and doubting," to say that by the first, "wrath," Paul was referring to the wrong attitude toward people, but with the second, problems in our hearts toward the Lord.

Let us remember that the Christian life and the Christian ministry are battles. We are engaged personally and together in a warfare. There are many injuries which we receive in this warfare, not necessarily physical (although Paul knew much about being hurt physically), but especially in our hearts. And so the tendencies to carry grudges, to refuse to be reconciled with those who have wronged us, as well as to doubt God, are strong. It is interesting that the Greek word translated "doubting" is the word from which we get our English word dialogue. A dialogue can be a discussion, or it can be a dispute. Sometimes we dispute with God, at least in our hearts. Effective, holy prayer is prayed when we are at peace with others and submissive to God and to His will.

Cf. Jas. 1:2-7.



What an important passage this in 1 Timothy 2 is for pastors and churches today! What we need is not new ideas of how we can get people to come to church, or how we can get them to listen to the Gospel. Paul was not called to entertain, but to preach. And he knew that in order for the Word of God to have the blessing of God there needed to be praying by holy men of God--and I might add, holy women of God. The work of the Lord will prosper when holy men in the pulpit are faithfully preaching and teaching the Word of God supported by holy men who are holding up their hands to God in prayer, seeking his blessing. May the Word and prayer have the same priority with us today that it had with the apostles and the early church of the first century. In any church there is always much work for men to do, work which ladies are unable to do--heavy lifting, work of various kinds. But there is no work that we have to do that is greater than praying. And there is nothing in prayer that we need to be more concerned about than that we are lifting up holy hands to God. All of our hands have been defiled with sin, but we can thank God for the continual cleansing we receive through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ! But let us be careful about how the members of our bodies can get us into trouble--our eyes, our ears, our mouths, our feet, our hands. But the members of our bodies can be greatly used of God for His glory. That is why it is important to learn and obey what we are told to do in Romans 12:1, 2.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 2:9-15

November 8, 1994

Intro: In my outline I have indicated that in the first eight verses of 1 Timothy 2 Paul was concerned about "prayer in the church." That seems to be the opinion of the majority of commentators whom I have consulted. But I would take the word "church" as meaning the men who are a part of the local church, in this case, the Ephesian church. But I doubt if Paul was speaking exclusively of the church meeting. Maybe he was, but it seems that the words in verse 8, "every where," indicate that he was emphasizing that men should pray both in and out of the church meeting, wherever they were and whenever time would allow them to give themselves to prayer. The lifting up of the hands would probably apply to the church meeting, and to private prayer in a private place, but, obviously, Paul would not expect the men to be walking down the street with their hands uplifted in prayer. This is what the Pharisees might do because such a posture in public would certainly lay a person open to the charge that he was praying "to be seen of men."

Now, as we move on to verse 9 it is apparent that Paul was addressing Christian ladies, "women in the church," or church women, but not limiting his comments just to the way that Christian ladies should dress when they go to church. It would apply to them wherever they go, and whatever they do. This comes under IV. in our outline:

- IV. Paul's Charges to Timothy Concerning His Ministry (1 Tim. 2:9-15).  
C. Concerning women in the church (1 Tim. 2:9-15).

In these days when there is a very strong attempt on the part of many to make men and women equal in everything, including the clothing that they wear, the remarks of Paul here as an apostle are taken by many who have weak views of inspiration, to be chauvinistic, that is, to indicate that men are superior to women. That is not true! We need to notice that Paul in verse 9 was speaking of how women were to "adorn" themselves. Thayer says in his Greek Lexicon that one translation of this word "adorn" is to gain honor. Another translation is that they were to garnish themselves. What Paul said here was to be their ornamentation.

So let us not take this passage as an attempt on the part of the Apostle Paul, or the Holy Spirit, to put women down. There is no book that has ever been written that gives women a higher place of honor than the Word of God does. Women were instructed to dress in a manner that was pleasing to the Lord, but we don't take that into consideration today. God is not in all of our thoughts. So we continue to move farther and farther from the Word of God, and, as we do, we create more and more problems for ourselves, and for our society. We wouldn't be voting on many of the measures we are voting on today if we were following the teachings of the Word of God.

But let us look, now, at what Paul has written here.

2:9 When Paul wrote, "In like manner, let women adorn themselves," he was indicating that he had been speaking about how men can "adorn" themselves. Men are not to be judged on the size of their biceps, nor upon whether their hair is dark or gray, nor whether they are tall or short. Men are to be honored and respected by the godliness of their lives because men are to be concerned, not about what pleases women, nor about what seems to give them greater standing with men, but they need to be concerned about what is pleasing to God. This does not mean that men

should be careless about their dress, nor does it mean that ladies are sinning if they dress attractively. But our primary concern, whether men or women, is not that we dress to please the opposite sex, but that we dress and behave in a manner that is pleasing to God. Instead, today we have women looking like men, and men looking like women--long hair, necklaces, earrings, and, what is the depth of depravity, homosexuality. If there is one thing that is clear from Scripture it is that we should not have any trouble distinguishing between men and women. God did not make us alike. We are not physically alike, nor are we emotionally alike, and our roles in life are different. A man cannot give birth to a baby, nor can a woman beget a child. The way our society is going is a commentary on how far we have gone in defying God and His will.

So ladies are to "adorn" themselves, but not in sexy, immodest attire, but "in modest apparel." "Apparel," as we might guess, is clothing. The Greek word here is \_\_\_\_\_. And the verb from which it comes is the verb \_\_\_\_\_. This is a combination of two Greek words, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, which literally translated means to send down. This probably means that modest apparel is not apparel that you send up, but that you send down, speaking of the length of the dress. It should say something to us that when we see royalty in their royal attire, the ladies are dressed in long dresses, very modestly attired. This is their adornment. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they must have been covered with some kind of a glory. After they sinned, they tried to cover themselves. But even what they did was not adequate, and so the Lord God took the skins of animals and clothed them.

The statement that the Lord made to the Laodicean church has some significance here. Listen to what we find in Rev. 3:18:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,  
that thou mayest be rich;  
and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed,  
**and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear;**  
and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

While the Lord was speaking of spiritual things here, the words have meaning even as far as clothing is concerned. The kind of attire that tends toward nakedness is shameful in God's sight. Remember that in our clothing as well as in everything else, our object is to please God, not each other. Don't let designers set the pace for you; get your guidance about everything from the Word of God.

"With shamefacedness and sobriety" -- The NASB says "modestly and discreetly." The NIV says "with decency and propriety." The RSV says "modestly and sensibly." These words are intended to make clearer what "modest apparel" is. "Shamefacedness" according to its Greek original speaks of that which would restrain a person from an unworthy act, or that which causes shame. See Thayer, p. 14. "Sobriety" speaks of self-control.

Yesterday, being the seventh day of the month, I read Proverbs 7. That is the chapter which speaks of how a woman, a married woman, seduced a young man. And to do so we are told that she went out on the streets "with the attire of an harlot." What message does "the attire of an harlot" convey, even today? A lack of self-control. That is how a harlot attracts men. She is willing to do whatever a man wants her to do--for money! And so she dresses to get that message across. Paul said that is never proper for any woman, and particularly is it completely inappropriate for one who knows the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then Paul went on to speak of "broided hair," "gold," "pearls," and "costly array."

"Broided hair" is braided hair. We see this in the outlandish hair styles that have become so popular today. A woman will start with her dress, then go to her hair, and then to all of the expensive jewelry that she can get her hands on.

I don't think that Paul was saying that women should not dress attractively, nor that it is sinful to go to a beauty shop. But discreetly is the word to be concerned about. Christian women get into trouble when they feel that they have to keep up with the latest fashions. A woman should never dress so that she will provoke the wrong kind of thoughts from men. It is not sinful to wear rings or bracelets or necklaces as long as it is done with discretion. Sometimes you will find Christian ladies who feel that it is spiritual to look as sloppy as they can. That is wrong, too. I think you will understand better what Paul was talking about when you hear the way announcers describe women in their dress when they turn out for some Hollywood production of some kind. Whatever we do, whether it is eating or drinking or dressing, all of us, men and women, are to do what we do to the glory of God. Cf. 1 Cor. 10:31.

Modesty and moderation are to be two of the distinguishing characteristics of Christian women in their appearance.

Paul continued along the same line in verse 10.

2:10 He had been speaking primarily about what women should not do; now he speaks of what they should do, what their chief attire should be --that "which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

One of our main problems today, speaking of those of us who are Christians, is that we have forgotten about that word "godliness." We claim to be Christians, but we have forgotten that a Christian can be identified because of his or her concern for "godliness." He or she modestly and appropriately takes care of the outer person (in dress and appearance), but his or her main concern is for the inner man--that it is pleasing to God.

Remember what "godliness" is. It describes a person who has been attracted to God, one who has a desire to please God, and to be like God. A Christian should be clean and neat and discreet in his appearance, but his behavior must be in agreement with what he professes to be.

"Good works" -- Probably the best example we have of a godly woman is the woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31. This was the text which Matthew Henry used when conducting his mother's funeral. A godly woman, a virtuous woman, is primarily concerned about pleasing God. She fears the Lord. And so she manifests her desire to please the Lord by the good works which she does. She doesn't worry because she can't do what God has appointed for men. She busies herself with the things which she can do in serving the Lord. Women have always had a very important place in the Lord's work, but it has not been as pastors, as elders, as deacons, or as teachers in the church where they would be over men. One thing that is very clear from Scripture is that God intends for men to be men, and for women to be women. And it is when we all are filling our God-given place that God is most is most pleased, we all are the happiest, our work is the most fruitful, and the church is most blessed.

We live in a world which is intent on breaking down the distinctions between men and women. Everywhere we look we can see men who seem to want to dress and act like women, and women who want to invade the ranks of men in the same way. And, of course, the end of this line in a society is a homosexual lifestyle. Let us not be led astray by the world. Let us all, men and women, as the Lord's people take our direction from the Word of God. Any other course is not only sinful, but it leads to disaster.

Let me suggest that a good project for you ladies would be to make a special study of women in the Bible. Peter recommended Sarah, the wife of Abraham, in 1 Peter 3. But you have so many in Scripture, along with a passage like Proverbs 31, which can not only give you a lot of information, but a great deal of inspiration.

"Good works" -- Dorcas is described in Acts 9:36 as a "woman full of good works and alms-deeds which she did."

Dr. Hendriksen says that the word "professing" in verse 10 means "to convey a message loudly, clearly" (p. 108). She is preaching a message of great importance by the way she dresses and by the way she lives, a message of "godliness." She doesn't preach from a pulpit in front of a congregation, but she preaches by her life in the daily good works which she does to serve the Lord and His people. Much of what women do goes unnoticed by most people, but none of it is unnoticed by the Lord.

Peter got into this same theme in 1 Peter 3:1-6. (Read.) I have known of "Christian counsellors" who have advised women who were having marital problems to dress more sexually for their husbands. You would never get that advice from the Apostle Peter. He spoke to wives about their inner selves, and that which could be a means of winning an unsaved husband to the Lord because her desire was to be pleasing to the Lord first!

November 14, 1994

2:11 Here we see that women are not to be passed over when it comes to the teaching of the Word of God. They are to be taught, and they are to learn.

Paul got into this same subject in 1 Corinthians, and I would like to remind you what he wrote there. I am speaking of 1 Cor. 14:34, 35:

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Now we must take this as a contradiction of 1 Tim. 2:11 which indicates that a woman is to be taught in church, but 1 Cor. 14:35 says that she should "ask" her husband "at home." Both are true. A pastor or any other teacher in the church is just as responsible to teach the ladies as he is the men. The spiritual growth of the ladies in a congregation is just as important as the spiritual growth of the men. But in addition to what a lady learns at church, she needs to be learning at home--and probably the learning at home has priority over the learning at church.

This is one place (among many) where we as husbands fail. A question

comes up at home about the Word of God, and what do most husbands tell their wives? "Go ask the pastor." But he shouldn't do that. A wife's husband is to be her teacher. This does not mean that it is wrong for a lady to ask her pastor about something in Scripture, but she needs to go to her husband first. If the husband doesn't know, then he should go to the pastor, or he should find out the answer from his own study of the Word of God. So you can see that in this way the husband is forced to learn, he is teaching, and it may be that if he is faithful in teaching his wife and family at home, the Lord might be preparing him for a place of leadership in the church. We will talk more about this when we get into chapter 3.

Paul told the Corinthians, "Let the women keep silence in the churches." This is what he wrote in 1 Cor. 14:34. He wrote the same thing in 1 Tim. 2:12 which we are coming to. But the Timothy passages helps us to understand the Corinthian passage. Women were not to be muzzled when they came to the meeting of the church. They could speak, but primarily they were to learn in silence. This means that they were to have their hearts open, they were to be receptive to the message, and even to reserve their comments if they felt that they were hearing something that was not quite right. Any questionable or false teaching should be taken up with her husband when they got home. If something were wrong, then it would be the responsibility of the husband to take it up with the elders of the church. But the woman was to be silent.

Now let us go on to 1 Tim. 2:12.

2:12 One reason a passage like this usually causes an uproar in our churches today is because we have gotten away from the Word of God concerning our methods. In many churches, perhaps I could say, in most churches, little or no attention is paid to the ways of the Lord. I am speaking about methods, God's methods. We are a generation of Christians who are absorbed with methods, but unfortunately they are our methods, not God's. God said here through Paul that women are not to teach, i.e., in the church. They are not "to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." "To usurp authority over" is the translation of one Greek word, a verb. It means to dominate. And to dominate means to take over, to control, to assume the position of superior authority.

I have been in classes where women have attempted to do this. They have "taken on" the teacher. They have questioned his teaching, and perhaps have suggested their own interpretation. Now whenever a woman does this, she is in the wrong, and she needs to be rebuked--graciously, of course, but rebuked.

Then, as Matthew Henry pointed out in his commentary, Paul cited two very important reasons which supported him in his teaching concerning the place of women in the church. The first reason is given in verse 13; the second, in verse 14.

2:13 Reason #1 in support of his teaching. "Adam was first formed, then Eve." It is very important for us to understand all of the Word of God because one part helps us to understand another part. And it is foolish to leave the OT to devote all of our time to the NT because, if we do, we are cutting ourselves off from teaching which will help us in this kind of a problem.

We all know, or should know, that God created Adam first, and then he took

a rib from Adam and made a wife for him, a helper for him, a woman whom Adam named "Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20). Paul got into this also in his first letter to the Corinthians. The first woman came out of the man, but every man from that time to this came out of a woman. But listen to the way that Paul stated it to the Corinthians:

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.  
9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman  
for the man (1 Cor 11:8-9).

What does this mean? It means that by creation God made the man as the dominate one. He is in the position of authority over the woman. But you will not find this order observed in the world. It is the Lord's people who know this truth, and it should never be more apparent than in two places:

- 1) The home.
- 2) The church.

This authority was established at creation, and it never has been changed, and never will.

What was the second reason behind Paul's teaching?

2:14 It is to be seen in the difference between Adam and Eve and their individual involvements in original sin.

"Adam was not deceived." God had told him what he was not to do in the Garden of Eden, but he did it anyway. It may have been with the encouragement of his wife, but he ate of the forbidden fruit knowing that he was doing the wrong thing.

The situation was different with Eve. She "was deceived." She likewise knew what the Lord had told her husband, but when she listened to the Devil, his argument seemed to be so convincing, and, furthermore, there did not seem to be anything wrong with the tree or the fruit ("good for food, ...pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise). The Devil had even told her that she would be like God, not "gods," if she were to eat of the fruit. And so she ate it, and gave it to her husband who also ate it. But she was deceived. And so she "was in the transgression." She turned aside, she went beyond what God had forbidden them to do, she disregarded the commandment of God.

William Hendriksen has a very find comment on this verse:

And so she fell into transgression, into the fatal stepping aside from the path of obedience. And now that which before was an unmixed blessing -- namely, that Eve, by virtue of her creation, constantly followed Adam -- is an unmixed blessing no longer; for now she who, by her sinful example, chose to rule him who at that moment was still her sinless husband, must obey the creature of her own designing, namely, her sinful husband. Hence, let none of her daughters follow her in reversing the divinely established order. Let none assume the role that was not intended for her. Let not the daughter of Eve teach, rule, lead, when the congregation gathers for worship. Let her learn, not teach; obey, not rule; follow, not lead (p. 110).

When God pronounced judgment first upon Satan, then upon Eve, and finally upon Adam, this is what He said to Eve:

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee (Gen. 3:16).

And so God put Adam in a position of authority over Eve. And so we read in Eph. 5:23 that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church..." This is not meant to be a tyrannical position for the husband, not a master/slave relationship, but one in which all of the tenderness and care that our Lord has for us, His bride, should be demonstrated by husbands whose primary, but not sole, responsibility is to care for her spiritually. That is why he has been appointed as her teacher.

We ought to recognize that Paul was not saying that a man is never deceived--because he often is. Nor was Paul saying that a wife will never deliberately do what is wrong--because she often does. But he was saying that there is a greater tendency in a man than in a woman to sin willfully and knowingly, and there is also more likelihood that a woman will be deceived than that a man will be deceived. It is not absolute in either case, but Paul was speaking of the greater possibility for each sex.

The most recent sin of Americans is our occupation with angels. People today are buying images of angels, and the usual line of trinkets that follow such a fad. We have as a nation turned to the truth, and this is just another example of how we have turned to fables. And there are many men who are involved in this, too. But the majority of people that are shown on TV as backing this seem to be women. Some women even claim to know their guardian angels names. There is no question that there are angels. The Bible clearly teaches that there are angels, and what their ministry is. But this present-day movement is not Biblical; it is idolatrous, and we have another blasphemous example of how we are worshipping and serving creatures more than we are the Creator.

People can never do anything that is more foolish than to turn from the teaching of the Word of God. It never improves things, but always leads us farther and farther from the Lord. May the Lord enable those of us who know Him to accept the place that He has given us, that we may please God. Only then can we expect His blessing, and only then can we find true happiness.

But I have one more verse before we are finished with this chapter.

2:15 As Paul wrote this verse, he undoubtedly had in mind that part of Eve's judgment in which the Lord declared, "'I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" (Gen. 3:16).

Before Adam and Eve sinned they were to have children because the Lord had told them to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). And after they sinned they were still to have children. But from that point on the birth of children was to be a very trying and sorrowful experience for a woman. And we know that it is. In reading through the OT again this year I have noticed how often the prophets likened the sufferings of people under divine judgment to the pain that a woman goes through when she is having a child. That is a result of sin. Evidently before the fall the birth of children would have been a very pleasant experience. But pain and sorrow in childbearing is a



part of God's judgment upon the woman because of her part in the fall.

This makes the word "notwithstanding" in verse 15 a word of grace. The birth of children to God's people is just like the birth of children to people who do not know the Lord. But here is hope for the Christian mother--or should I say, for the godly mother.

When Paul spoke of being "saved" here, he was not speaking just of the salvation of a mother's soul (although that is included), but he was speaking also of the help and blessing that God would give mothers through their pregnancy and during the birth of their child "if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

However, Paul was not limiting the idea of blessing to just the nine months of a woman's pregnancy. Rather he was showing that bearing children was God's will for the woman, not the man. And that in the bearing of children and in the raising of children women would experience the blessing of God for themselves, for their children, and for their husbands, IF they made it their main business to walk with the Lord day by day--"in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

Although we have had these words before, let us review their meaning and their emphasis here.

"Faith" -- Faith is believing God, and trusting God. And you will remember that Paul spoke of "obedience to the faith" (Rom. 1:5). If we believe God, and are trusting God, we will obey God. Eve sinned by not believing God, and not trusting God, and so she did not obey God. Women are to make faith and trusting and obedience their greatest priority.

"Love" -- This, too, would have its emphasis with God, but the Lord made it clear in Matt. 22:34-40 that we cannot separate our love for God and our love for the people of God. Cf. also 1 John 3:14. When Eve encouraged Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, she was not acting in love toward him. If we love God, we are going to obey Him because we want to please Him. If we love the Lord's people we are going to be seeking their highest spiritual good. God made Eve to be Adam's helper, and she was to be his helper in spiritual matters as well as in everything else. A mother's true love for her children will mean that she will live to see her children saved, and then live to see them built upon in lives of precious fellowship with the Lord.

"Holiness" -- The more godly a woman is, the more help she will be to her husband, and the greater will be the blessing that she is to him. A holy woman will not compromise with sin. It is enough for her that God says that some things are good, and that other things are bad. And she never wants to step over the line, or turn aside, as Eve did. She hates sin, but loves righteousness, and desire to be saintly at heart as well as in her behavior.

And all of this is "with sobriety." We had this word in 2:9. It speaks of self-control, of a sound mind. Dr. Hendricksen like the translation, good sense. Nothing is more insane than for us to sin; nothing expresses greater sanity than for us to do what pleases God.

Therefore, a woman, bearing children and raising children, can expect the blessing of God, and great satisfaction with her God-given place in life, if in it all and through it all she continues by the grace of God to seek,

more than anything else in her life, to be pleasing to the Lord.

The word "notwithstanding" contains a word of hope and encouragement for all of us. So often we are inclined to feel that, because of some way, or some ways, in which we have displeased the Lord, that we can never again expect to have His blessing. We certainly would be inclined to think that about Adam and Eve after they sinned so grievously against the Lord, bringing the curse of sin upon the whole human race, and making it necessary for God to send His Son as the Redeemer. But the grace of God is truly amazing grace. 1 Timothy 2:15 tells us that there is hope for all of us. God does not cast away His people. Our sins should keep us reminded of how much we need the Lord, and how grateful we should be that when we turn to Him, determined by His grace to do His will, the blessing of the Lord can not only be restored in our lives, but we can expect to see greater blessings than we ever expected to see.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 3:1-13

November 21, 1994

Intro: After a person has been saved and has been given some instruction about Bible reading, prayer, and how to live as a Christian, the next item of importance is getting that young Christian into a good church--good, from a Biblical standpoint. Churches are not always Biblical. And churches do not always have the right kind of leadership. The Bible is very clear about what a church is, what it is for, and its importance for every child of God.

We don't know exactly where the church at Ephesus was in its development when Paul wrote 1 Timothy, but it would seem that it was still in its early stages. From Paul's epistle to Titus, we know why Paul left him in Crete. That is stated in Titus 1:5:

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

It is entirely possible that Timothy had been left in Ephesus for the same purpose. We do know from Acts 20:17 that when Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, and got as far as Miletus, from there he "called the elders of the church" to come to him, so there were elders in the Ephesian church at that time.

It is clear from 1 Timothy 3 and from Titus 1 that it was very important to get the right men, men with the right spiritual qualifications, if the work of the Lord were to enjoy the blessing of God. Therefore, here in 1 Timothy 3 we have Paul describing the qualifications for both elders and deacons; in Titus 1, the qualifications for the same. One thing to notice in Titus 1 is that in verse 5 Paul called them "elders," but in verse 6 he called them "bishops"--the same men. Here in 1 Timothy he called them "bishops," and then went on to speak of a second group of leaders called "deacons." However, in 1 Timothy 5:17 and 19 Paul spoke of them as "elders."

The fact that bishops and elders were the same is confirmed also by Peter in 1 Peter 5:1, 2 where in verse 1 he addresses them as "elders," but in verse 2 he told them to take the oversight, the verb from which we get the Greek word for bishop. ("Taking the oversight" is not found in all of the MSS, but is found in the Received Text.) It was the responsibility of the elders to exercise oversight with the flock of God, feeding them, protecting them, corralling them, etc.

So we must conclude that elders were bishops, and bishops were elders. They are two titles for the same office. The deacons, as I have indicated, were another group.

Why did Paul use two different titles for the same group of men? It had to be that he wanted to bring out two aspects of the office.

Since Paul used the word "bishops" first, let us begin with them, and then go on to define also the term "elders."

"Bishops" -- This word is a translation of the Greek word, ἐπίσκοπος. You can tell by the sound of the word that we get our word episcopal from it. This title was chosen by the Church of England in the US because their leading ministers are called bishops.

The Greek word, ἐπίσκοπος, is formed from two Greek words, ἐπί, which

means upon, and σκοπέω, which means to look. When you put them together an ἐπισκοπος is one who looks upon, or looks over. And so he is lit. an overseer. He looks after the people of the church. He is to care for them in a spiritual sense. And he is to see that things are done properly in the church.

Unfortunately this has become a word which has a high place in the hierarchy of some churches, but actually it belongs to those who are the spiritual leaders in any congregation.

"Elders" -- This is a translation of the Greek word, πρεσβύτερος. And you can tell from the sound of this word that from it we get our word, Presbyterian. The Presbyterians are governed by a presbytery, which is a body of elders. The Jews also had their elders. We often read about the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.

The word speaks of the elders as the men who presided over the church. It suggests that the church is not a democracy, governed by the people, but is led by the elders. And this is one reason why it is so important to have the right men in places of leadership. In the early churches it does not seem that the elders were elected by the people, but were appointed by the apostles, or by those designated by the apostles, such as, Timothy and Titus were appointed by the Apostle Paul. It is general considered that Acts 6 had to do with the appointment of the first deacons, and the church did have a voice in that, but under the leadership and approval of the elders.

This section of 1 Timothy (3:1-13) is concerned with the qualifications for the men who were to lead in the ministry of the church--first, the bishops, or elders in verses 1-7, and then the deacons in verses 8-13.

Before we look at the qualifications of the elders, let me point out a major reason for these standards beyond the fact that the elders and deacons were to meet requirements.

When Peter was writing about elders in 1 Peter 5, he said this:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

"Ensamples" is an old English spelling for examples. And the word which Peter used for examples was the Greek word from which we get our word, type. They were men whose lives were to be examples to their people. The people were not only to be able to follow the teaching of the elders, but they were to be able to pattern their lives after the elders of the church. So you can see what a tremendous responsibility was placed upon the men who were leading the churches, and why it was so important for them to be true men of God!

Paul emphasized this also in Phil. 3:17 where he wrote,

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

I think it is interesting that when Paul wrote "mark them," he used the basic verb which is used in forming the word bishop. It was not only the responsibility of the leaders to oversee the people, but it was the responsibility of the people to "see," to observe, to become acquainted with the lives of their leaders.

In 1 Timothy 4:12 we have this word example used again as Paul was exhorting Timothy. (Read.)

I know that you all understand what an example is, but let's take the time to define it so that we can be ever clearer on what it means. An example is one who serves as a pattern, or model, of what others in a particular group should be. Our great Example, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Elders are to follow the Lord in doctrine and life, so that their people will have a living, human pattern to follow. This is why Paul told the Corinthians, "Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Illus: Often when I think of a type or a pattern, my mind goes back to my early days when I used to go down to the Western Steel Casting Company in Tacoma, and sometimes it was in Seattle, where my Dad worked. He was the Treasurer and Office Manager of the company, and so he didn't work in the foundry, but if he was not ready to go home when I went there, I would go out in the foundry to see the men at work, pouring hot steel into molds made of packed sand, to make steel castings. Preparation for the pouring they would get wooden patterns from the pattern maker. They would pack the black sand around the patterns in a wood frame, and when they finished, they would gently lift out the pattern, and put the two sides of the frame together. Then they would pour in the steel. When the steel was cool, they would lift the frames off, and there would be a piece of steel which looked just like the pattern.

So what am I trying to say?

I am saying, as I believe Paul was, that these qualifications for elders and deacons were not only important for elders and deacons, but they were for all of the church to know because the elders and deacons were types of what all Christians should be. When you consider this, then you see that what Paul was doing here was to define what godly leaders should be, and what their people should strive to be in following the example of their lives.

For us as Christians we should not need to be told what is involved in following the example of other Christians, but let me say it anyway. We know, or should not, that our Lord is not just concerned about our outward behavior (although that is very important). We are concerned about our hearts primarily, what we are inside, because it is only when our outward behavior is a manifestation of what we are in our hearts, that God is well pleased. The Pharisees looked good on the outside, but the Lord said that inside they were full of dead men's bones. Listen to what he said to them.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt 23:27-28).

We need to remember the words of Solomon in Prov. 4:23:

Keep thy heart with all diligence;  
for out of it are the issues of life.

So, while these first thirteen verses of chapter 3 apply to church leaders, they are a picture, a pattern, an illustration, a type, of what we all should be by the grace of God. But let me say for our elders and

deacons (and I, as the pastor, am one of the elders), and I know that I speak for every pastor, every elder, every deacon who loves the Lord and wants to be what He wants all of us to be, that we do not feel that we are perfect examples. Far from it! We are only sinners saved by grace like everyone else who knows the Lord. But the point in this chapter is that this is what we want to be, and we are exercising all of the grace that God is pleased to give us so that we can say with all of our imperfections, "Join us as we all seek to be like our Lord Jesus Christ." We will never be like Him until we see Him, but we all must be headed in that direction day after day, and the leaders in the church are to see the pace, as Peter said, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:3). How thankful we ought to be that we know anyone who by his life makes us want to be like the Lord Jesus.

The word that Paul used for "pattern" in 1 Tim. 1:16 was a different word, but the idea is the same.

But let us look now at the text.

1. The qualifications for the office of bishops, or elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

3:1 "This is a true saying" -- This is the second of three faithful sayings in 1 Timothy. The first was in 1:15; the third is in 4:9.

Lit., Faithful is the word, or, It is a true saying. It would seem that this was a necessary comment because the risks involved in being an elder in the first century because of the severe opposition which the church faced, it might be open to question that if a man desired such an office, he desired "a good work." (This was Fausset's idea.) But, in spite of the trials, the blessings of such a ministry were so great that they far outweighed the troubles that an elder would experience--from within the church as well as from without.

Paul had reminded Timothy in 1:18 that to be involved in the ministry was to be involved in a warfare, spiritual warfare. But it was still a good work.

Paul used two different words which are both translated desire. It certainly would not be consistent with the teaching of the Apostle Paul to encourage pride in a ministry which was spiritual. So we can rule that out. However, the first "desire" does mean to reach out after something. The second word, "desireth," means about the same thing, to set one's heart on a thing. We still have to rule out a selfish ambition to hold a certain position in the church.

Perhaps Psalm 37:4 helps us to understand what Paul was saying here:  
Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

There are many who feel that the proper interpretation of this verse is that, if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He, the Lord, will give us the desires that He wants us to have. That seems more likely than the idea that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us what we want to have.

Two things can be said about the office of a bishop:

- 1) A bishop needed to be called, or appointed, by God for this position.

2) No man should be in this office who did not really want to be there. So, for a man to desire it was evidence that God had been working in his heart or he would not have had that desire, and that if he were appointed to that office he would be serving in a position which he wanted, not for himself to glory in it, but that he might serve the Lord and serve the people of God. And so Paul was commending such a desire when it was found in the heart of a godly man.

So often we find that people have to be "talked into" serving in a position of leadership in the Lord's work. Paul would never be involved in such a thing. He sought to minister to the hearts of men, trusting the Lord to give them the desire for what He wanted them to have. Could this not be a reason that Paul had spoken to the men in the early part of chapter 2 about prayer?

Notice how Paul spoke to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:28-32, and what their responsibilities were:

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Here we have the duties, as well as the problems, and Paul's great concern that the Lord's blessing would be upon the "good work" which they would be doing. After all, what work is better than to be working with the saints, seeking their sanctification, and preparing them for glory?

It is very important for us to keep the requirements of elders and deacons in mind. Often men are chosen because they are well-liked, or because they are prominent in business, but not because they have shown themselves to be godly men who are growing spiritually, and who not only want to please the Lord themselves, but are concerned about the spiritual needs of others. Although prayer is not mentioned in this list, it has been mentioned in chapter 2, and it would appear to be inconceivable that a man would be appointed to lead the church if he were not a man given to prayer.

3:2 Now let us look at the qualifications for the office of an elder.

1) He must be "blameless." The word "must" is the same word which we had several times in John's Gospel. Thayer says that this word is "suggestive of moral obligation, denoting esp. that constraint which arises from divine appointment" (p. 126). It is required by God because of the nature of the bishop's ministry. And it is the elder's responsibility to see that, by the grace of God, he remains "blameless."

"Blameless" is used again in 5:7 and 6:14. In the latter verse the translation is "unrebukeable." The NASB has "above reproach." Matthew Henry says that he cannot be under a scandal of any kind. He cannot be in a position where he is blamed for something that would be

inconsistent with his position as a bishop.

We have to remember that, while the standards here are high, they do not mean perfection, or no one would be able to serve. But it means that at the time of his calling, and throughout his life thereafter, he cannot be charged with anything that is shameful or disgraceful. In other words, he cannot be involved in some sin.

- 2) "The husband of one wife" -- If we take this in its historical context, which is important, we must remember that the moral conditions of the Ephesians, like most people every place where the Gospel went, were terrible. Adultery was common, as were multiple marriages. So when men were saved they had some big changes to make in their lives. One of these was settling down to one wife, instead of two or three, or more. And so it would seem that Paul may have meant one wife after a man was saved, even though he had had multiple wives before he was saved.

There are many different views on this subject. Dr. Lewis Johnson takes this as meaning one wife--ever! And so when his first wife died, and he married again, he resigned his position as an elder. Others feel that it means that a divorced man cannot serve as an elder, regardless of when the divorce took place. When Dr. James Boice was here in Portland a week or so ago, he was asked about this. His position is that if a man were divorced before he was saved, and remarried, staying married to his second wife after he was saved, that he could serve as an elder. It is always best if an elder has been married just once, unless his wife has died. If he remarries in the Lord, I personally don't see why he could not serve as an elder. But it shows how very important the marriage relationship is in the sight of God, and how important it ought to be to us, too. It is certainly better if elders have not been involved at all in a divorce.

- 3) "Vigilant" -- Most of the translations use the word temperate. Even though the next word means "sober," that can be the meaning of this word also but with the idea of being careful about his life so that nothing, including the use of strong drinks, would hinder him in the exercise of his responsibilities. It would be hard to see how a drinker could possibly qualify as an elder.
- 4) "Sober" -- This speaks of being sensible, self-controlled. If he has to oppose what another brother is doing, it does it in a restrained and loving way, rather than being harsh and full of condemnation. Often a person can be so opinionated that nobody can get along with him. A critical person who is always judging others would not qualify.
- 5) "Of good behavior" -- This is a person who is not only orderly in his dress and outward behavior, but inwardly as well. He has a well-ordered life (Thayer, p. 356). He is proper in his behavior. He says and does the right things. He is courteous and considerate of others. He is what we would call a real gentleman, and is able to make people feel comfortable in his presence.
- 6) "Given to hospitality" -- He likes people. His home is open to them. He would open his home to believers even though he was not previously a friend. He recognizes the saints in need and does what he can to relieve those needs. He loves the brethren, and loves to be with



them.

- 7) "Apt to teach" -- This means that he not only likes to teach, but that he is gifted, skillful in teaching. And it would not only include a class situation, but personally, and in conversation, he would have a desire to help people get a greater understanding of the Word of God. So that this would mean that he would have to be a faithful student of the Word of God. This calls for a certain degree of maturity.

Cf. what Paul said in 2 Tim. 2:24-26. This would mean that "apt to teach" includes the conviction that it is through His Word that God works, bringing sinners to Himself, and building up the people of God in the faith. Paul does not stress here what is taught (although it would be ridiculous to think that it was anything but the Word of God). His emphasis is upon the ability of the elder to teach.

November 28, 1994

3:3 The list continues.

- 8) "Not given to wine" -- This is an interesting expression because "given to wine" is the translation of one Greek word in the original. It means to be beside the wine. It describes a person who stays with his wine. We would probably describe such a person today as addicted. He can't leave it alone.

We know from 1 Tim. 5:23 that wine was often used as a substitute for water in countries where the water was not fit to drink, and that it was used as a medicine. A person, however, who went beyond the accepted usage was to be excluded from serving as an elder. It showed a lack of self-control as far as the person who was "given to wine" was concerned. But it also led to other abuses.

I don't think that we can avoid the fact that they used wine in Bible lands and Bible times. But the situation was far different then from what it is today. Today we have large companies in many parts of the world who make many varieties of wine which are high in their alcoholic content. Wine could be intoxicating in Bible times as well, but that was to be avoided, and under certain circumstances wine was to be avoided altogether, such as when the priests went in to minister before the Lord. Cf. Lev. 10:8, 9:

8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying,  
9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations.

In Proverbs "new wine" is an indication of the blessing of the Lord:

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine (Prov 3:9-10).

This was probably what we would call grape juice. But it was called wine, and was acceptable. But it could become fermented, and then it could cause trouble. That is why you have passages like the following in the book of Proverbs:

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise (Prov. 20:1).

And then we have Prov. 23:29-35:

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

We live in a culture where wine is socially acceptable. In fact, it amounts to a status symbol in many instances. It is considered smart to drink. Addiction to intoxicating drinks has become one of our greatest social problems. Therefore, for the Christian it is always best and safest to stay as far away from it as you can get. Drinking has ruined lives, broken up marriages, put an end to promising careers. We have good water today (or it's supposed to be good), and so elders are to set the pace here for the people of God under their leadership.

- 9) "No striker" -- This describes a person who is not only quarrelsome, but who is ready to fight. How different this is from our Lord Who was "meek and lowly in heart," and from the servant of the Lord described in 2 Tim. 2:24-26. Even if a man does not resort to physical violence, a quarreling, contentious attitude eliminates a man from serving as an elder.
- 10) "Not greedy of filthy lucre" -- This is a man who is money-hungry, covetous. The problem with this is described in 1 Tim. 6:10. (Read.) Not money, but the love of money, is the root, that out of which grows all kinds of evil, including departing from the faith.

This word is not found in all of the Greek MSS, and that is why it is not mentioned in some of the more recent translations. But the idea is included in the last word in this verse, "covetous," and so I want to deal with it here.

It is interesting that often men who are chosen to serve on boards of our Christian schools, universities and seminaries, are men with money. Now not all men with money are "greedy of filthy lucre," but special care should be taken when considering the rich to serve as an elder, or in such important positions. The desire for money even for an institution will sometimes cause a man to set aside Biblical principles in order to get the money that is needed.

Paul was saying here that what a man believes about money, his own personal finances, as well as money in the Lord's work, must be a very important consideration when considering men to serve as elders. There is much going on today in churches to raise money which is in opposition with the teaching of Scripture. We need men who are wise

as far as money is concerned, willing to trust the Lord with the finances of the Lords' work, and to wait on the Lord for His provision. You don't run into many George Muellers or Hudson Taylors today.

Having seen what we have in the first part of verse 3, it is not surprising to find Paul saying what he did in the last part of this verse. I say this because if the first three qualifications of this verse are to be met, the last three in certainly follow. But the Apostle Paul (and the Holy Spirit) must have felt that these conditions were so important that they needed to be emphasized.

- 11) "Patient" -- Probably a better translation would be, gentle. One man has suggested, "sweet reasonableness" (Matthew Arnold quoted by Thayer, p. 238). This is a man who is going to be fair, not given to partiality. This is what we ought to have in mind when we think of a gentle-man, a gentleman. Archbishop Trench said that the mere existence of this word "is itself a signal evidence of the high development of ethics among the Greeks" (pp. 153, 154). It is a word which is needed in our country today. It emphasizes not a person's rights, but what is right in God's sight.
- 12) "Not a brawler" -- Uncontentious is a good word to explain "not a brawler." This is a person who always has to have things done his way. No other way could possibly be as good. He always has an alternate plan from that which the others are willing to accept. This man knows nothing about, nor does he care about, "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He is a loner. He is not a team worker.
- 13) "Not covetous" -- A covetous person can covet man things, but special emphasis is placed in this word upon money. This word is used in Heb. 13:5, and that verse sheds some light on its meaning. Let me read verse 6 with it:
  - 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
  - 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

And so we can see that Paul was referring to a person who was more inclined to trust in money than he was to trust in the Lord. A group of elders is in real trouble when even one of their number is covetous.

3:4 The list continues in this verse.

- 14) "One that ruleth well his own house" -- This is the second reference that Paul has made to an elder's home life. He is to have one wife, according to verse 2; here he is to have control of his children.

"Ruleth" is a Greek word which means to stand before. This means that he is in charge. He has taught his children to obey him, and they do! But he does it "well." This means that his home is what a home ought to be. Of course he has to have the full cooperation of his wife. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 "looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her (Prov.

31:27, 28). Together they have their children in subjection, not out of fear, but because their children love them and want to please them. But no home remains static, and so the father is responsible to see that he is a godly father, and that he is raising his children to be godly as well. He teaches them not just to please him, but to please the Lord.

The following verse goes with verse 4.

3:5 The reason that a man's home is so important is because it is actually a place of training for him to serve possibly as an elder. If he doesn't know how to stand before his children, then how could you expect him "to take care of the church of God?" Here Paul was suggesting that the local church is very similar to a family. The difference is that no elder serves alone. All of the elders take care of the church together.

If a man lets his children do whatever they want to do, or even if he can be pressured into doing things which he knows are not right, then he is not standing before his family, and could not be expected to stand before the church when a stand needs to be taken. A father's first responsibility in his family is to please the Lord, and an elder's first responsibility in the church is to please the Lord also. If the elders are careful to please the Lord, this is the best care that they can give to their church family.

"With all gravity" does not refer to the attitude of the father, but the attitude of the children. This means, not that they are cowed into obeying their father, but they do it with the honor which children are to give to their father, which the Apostle Paul has reminded us is the first commandment with promise. Cf. Eph. 6:1-4:

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It is not easy to raise children. Our parents did not have an easy time with us. We all have our struggles with our children. And our children will have the same kind of problems with their children. But we have to know what we are doing, and do it--and spend a lot of time in prayer for the help and blessing of the Lord.

To bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" means, as it is stated in the NASB, to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Fathers need to train their children (which is the main idea in "discipline," not punishment), and teach their children. And this is what elders are to do in the church. We train our children to please the Lord so that when they leave home and are on their own, they will keep on doing the will of God.

So while Paul was mentioning the qualifications for elders, he was reminding all fathers of what their responsibility at home was.

3:6 Two more verses are given to the qualifications for elders.

15) "Not a novice" -- The Greek word which is translated "novice," is the

word from which we get our English word, neophyte. A neophyte is a recent convert, a beginner. What was Paul saying here? He was saying that elders are to be considered for their spiritual lives. We need to ask, does he know the Word, and is he capable of teaching the Word? Is he a man who seeks to please the Lord, who knows how to trust the Lord? Is he a godly man? Does he pray? Is he a faithful man-- faithful to the Lord, faithful to his family, faithful to the church, attending its meetings faithfully?

One of the reasons for the shallowness of churches today is that in many instances they are led by novices. A man may be prominent in the world, and very successful in his business, but that does not mean he is qualified to be an elder. We need to know if he truly is saved, loves the Lord and His Word, and believes that the Word of God is sufficient for elders to know how to take care of the church. We need to know if he is looking for new and exciting ways of reaching people, or if he is really depending upon the Holy Spirit to use the Word to draw people to Christ, and after they are saved, to see them grow in the Lord.

In addition to the fact that a novice will mislead, his own problem is that his heart will be lifted up in pride because of the position that he holds, and he will fall under the judgment of God, as the Devil did. Pride is the root sin. Dr. Mitchell used to point this out over and over again. Pride breeds other sins. We have seen men with many years of experience in the ministry who have fallen because of pride.

Peter is a good example for us in this. He had plenty of trouble early in his life as an apostle. He assured the Lord that he would stand by Him even if the other disciples didn't. And then he failed the Lord by denying that he even knew him. However later, when Peter arrived at the home of Cornelius, where he had been called, this is what Luke recorded at he wrote the book of Acts:

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man (Acts 10:25-26).

There might have been a day when Peter would have enjoyed having a Gentile bow before him to worship him, a Jew, but not any more. Peter was there to serve and glorify the Lord, not himself.

In my Bible reading this year I have noticed how again and again, when the Lord was speaking of judgments which He brought upon His own people as well as other nations, in most instances the reason was pride! Let this be a lesson to all of us.

3:7 We come now to the final qualification for elders which Paul mentioned in this epistle. It is #16.

16) "He must have a good report of them which are without" -- When Paul spoke of "them which are without," he was referring to the testimony that a prospective elder has in the world. Do his neighbors like him? Does he pay his bills? Do they know him to be a man of his word? Is he careful to keep his life above reproach? Non-Christians can't judge him from a spiritual standpoint because they don't have that kind of understanding, but they can be very positive about whether or not they like him, and trust him.

Have you noticed that this is the second verse which speaks of falling? See verse 6. And the same word appears again in 6:9. We are all in danger of falling, not falling out of salvation, but falling out of fellowship with the Lord. Any time we fall out of fellowship with the Lord, the results can be disastrous.

It is bad enough that our own hearts can lead us astray, but, in addition, the Devil is continually setting traps for us. Remember we are in a warfare, and we need always to be on our guard. The Devil loves to do anything that will discredit us in the eyes of the people of the church, but also in the eyes of the people of the world. He would shame us. He would ruin our testimony. He would bring us into reproach and shame.

One of the best ways of avoiding the Devil's traps is for us to be just as careful about our testimonies when we are with the world as we are when we are with the Lord's people. Remember what Paul wrote to the Colossian believers:

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man (Col. 4:5-6).

And so Paul has give sixteen spiritual qualifications for the office of the bishop, or elder. But remember that they are sixteen ways in which the elder is to be an example to the people of God. And so we can say that these are sixteen ways in which Paul has described what it means to be a godly man or a godly women--as these may apply to each of us. The list, of course, is not complete. But Paul has given us enough so that we all can know the identifying marks of a child of God who is seeking to walk daily in fellowship with his Lord. We need to come back to this list again and again, so that we will know what to look for in our leaders, and so we will know what our leaders are looking for in us. Only God is sufficient for such a ministry, but He is sufficient. He is always ready to make us what He asks us to be.

December 5, 1994

The qualifications for the second group of leaders in the church is given in verses 8 through 13--the qualifications for deacons. In verse 11 we have the wives of deacons mentioned. Some expositors feel that Paul was talking about deaconesses, an office which some churches have to assist the deacons. But the best lexicons indicate that the word γυναίκες means a woman--of any age, married or single or even widowed, but that it is not a special office in the church. This does not mean that women cannot assist the deacons in their work, but Paul's emphasis seems to have been upon the wives of the deacons, probably because they would be the most likely ones to help their husbands in the work that they did in the church and for the people of the church.

And so we now come to:

2. The qualifications for the office of a deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

The Greek word for deacon is διάκονος. It is the word for a servant, a person who serves others. He is not a bondservant, a slave, but he is one

who gives help to others, to those who have some special need.

It is generally thought that the first deacons were the men appointed in Acts 6 because the root of the word "ministration" in Acts 6:1 and of "serve" in Acts 6:2 is the same as the word "deacon" here in 1 Tim. 3:8. From Acts 6 we learn that the men appointed by the church in Jerusalem were to make sure that both the Grecian widows and the Hebrew widows received the care that they needed--care which Paul discussed later in 1 Timothy.

Actually both bishops and elders, as well as deacons, are servants of the people of God, not being in a position of submission to the desires of the people, but of ministering to their needs whether it be spiritual (as in the case of the elders), or material and physical (as in the case of the deacons). In 1 Tim. 1:12 where Paul said that the Lord put him in "the ministry," he actually used the word διακονία. So we always have to determine from the context what the particular meaning of διάκονος and its related words, is.

In our work here we have sought to maintain these distinctions between elders and deacons. The elders are responsible for the ministry of the Word. They are the teachers. They are not necessarily the only teachers, but they are responsible for the purity of the teaching. They are to be sure that the doctrine of the church remains true to the Word of God. The elders also have the oversight of the people so as to provide guidance and help for the people in their spiritual needs. And I can say as a pastor, and also as an elder, that it is a great blessing to have men serving as elders who share in the pastoral work.

Our deacons have the responsibility of taking care of our building, of doing those things which are necessary to be sure that the facilities are ready for the church meetings. In our work they handle the funds of the church. The elders can advise them, and make recommendations as, for example, what the pastor's salary will be, what we will pay visiting speakers, as well as the payment of the bills which we have for the regular work of the church--rent, etc. But they also are responsible to give help to our people when special financial needs arise, as our resources permit us to help. I hope that you can see the distinction between the responsibilities of the elders as compared with those of the deacons.

And let me say a couple of added words before we look at the qualifications of the deacons:

- 1) The Word of God teaches us that these are the only two offices a church needs. It has become the habit of churches today to multiply the members of the "church staff." Churches have needs, and so they hire somebody, usually an outsider, to help. The result is that you have people coming in with their own ideas as to how things should be done, and often their ideas have nothing to do with Scripture. And this keeps the people of the church from becoming involved in the ministry of the church. The idea has developed in the twentieth century that the church is responsible for the social and physical activities of the Lord's people, and so time is given by the church leaders to have sports activities and parties of various kinds. But this is not what the elders and deacons have been appointed to do. Many churches who build will start out with a gymnasium rather than a sanctuary, with always the idea that the meeting place will come later. But what does this say about our priorities. We need to get back to the Word of God for the guidance we need in doing the Lord's

work the way He wants it to be done. The Bible gives us all of the guidance that we need.

- 2) You will notice from Acts 6 as well as the passage we are considering here in 1 Timothy 3, that it is just as important for the deacons to be godly men as it is for the elders to be godly. The standards are just as high. We can see that Christian character was important even from the instructions given to the Jerusalem church when they appointed the first deacons in Acts 6.

Let us see what the qualifications are. They are just as important for deacons today as they ever were.

3:8 "Must...be" is understood from verse 2. It was imperative that each deacon measure up, and that he continue to measure up as long as he was a deacon.

By the way, let me point out to you that there were no term limits either for elders or deacons. Their calling and appointments were life-long! The first qualification was that a deacon must be:

- 1) "Grave" -- Notice that this is also the first qualification mentioned for the wives in verse 11. In Titus 2:2 it is mentioned as what the "aged men" need to be--adding to our emphasis that elders and deacons are to be examples to all of the people of God. This same word is translated as "honest" in Phil. 4:8. Applied to deacons and their wives, it means that they must be people who have the respect of the church. They are dignified, not frivolous; serious, but not gloomy. He is a person who can be trusted, not only for his honesty, but for his wisdom.
- 2) "Not doubletongued" -- He must not be a person "who talks out of both sides of his mouth," as we often describe a person who tells one person one thing, and something completely different to someone else. This is the only time this word is used in the Scriptures. You can depend upon his word.
- 3) "Not given to much wine" -- This is essentially the same as that which we had concerning the elders in the first statement of verse 3. He must be a self-controlled person, not given to any kind of excesses.
- 4) "Not greedy of filthy lucre" -- This, too, was a requirement for elders. See 3:3. How important it is for church leaders to have a healthy attitude about money.

Do you remember what the book of Proverbs tells us about a wise man's request?

7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain (Prov. 30:7-9).

As we learned when speaking of the elders, Paul in chapter 6 mentioned that one thing that a desire for wealth does to people is to make them deny the faith. And this is implied in what we read in Proverbs.

We have an illustration of this also in what the Lord commanded Moses



to tell the children of Israel about the time when they would be in the promised land:

- 10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,
- 11 And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;
- 12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage (Deut 6:10-12).

We have an illustration of this also in Ananias and Sapphira. Cf. Acts 5:1-11. This kind of a problem often does not surface until a person is faced with a temptation regarding money. Ananias was one who was unqualified to serve as a deacon.

3:9 The next qualification is here in verse 9.

- 5) "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" -- This is a doctrinal qualification. "Holding" means that he is established in the truth, and does not waver concerning it. It does not mean that he knows everything that he can know, but he is well-taught, and so thoroughly convinced that he cannot be shaken from the truth. "Mystery" has to do with truth which God did not see fit to reveal until the Lord came. It would certainly mean in this case that a deacon would know the difference between law and grace. And he holds it in "a pure conscience" because he knows that he is not violating the truth by the life which he lives. A man who meets this standard would know what the Apostle John was saying when he wrote what we read in 1 John 3:18-22:

- 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.
- 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.
- 20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
- 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.
- 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

What this requirement amounts to is that this person is not a hypocrite. Not only is his doctrine right, but his life accords with his doctrine. And this is what will make him effective in prayer as verse 22 indicates. If this qualification is met, it is doubtful if such a person would be disqualified on any other requirement for the office of a deacon.

3:10 Let us see here how Paul continued.

- 6) Often men are put in the office of an elder or a deacon with the hope that, although he is not fully qualified, he will probably develop with the responsibility. Paul would not accept that, and obviously such would not be pleasing to the Holy Spirit either. Men need to be

proven first! This would be the equivalent of saying that he is not to be a novice. (See 1 Tim. 3:6 regarding elders.) He must not be a beginner. Give him time to prove himself. Let him be observed under testing, and show himself to be "blameless." This is a different word from the one translated the same way in verse 2, but the meanings are very similar. The one in this verse, according to Trench, giving Chrysostom's definition, means not only that he has been cleared of any charge, but that no charge has been made against him. He is a man who has carefully sought to live above reproach, not putting himself in any compromising situation.

3:11 At this point the Apostle turned to speak briefly about the wife of a deacon. He could meet all of the above qualifications, but if his wife were a problem in any way, it would disqualify him. Paul mentioned four qualifications for a deacon's wife.

First, she must be "grave"--the same word given above in verse 8 for her husband. She must be respected, dignified, held in high esteem by the people of the church.

Second, "not slanderers." Satan is a slanderer. He is an accuser of the brethren. A deacon's wife must not bring charges against anyone even though her charges might be true. This is not her responsibility. In fact, it is her responsibility that she doesn't become involved in such a thing.

Third, "sober." This is the same word as "vigilant" in 3:2. It speaks of a person who is not a drinker. She has herself under control, and she keeps watch on herself to make sure that she stays that way.

Fourth, "faithful in all things." She is dependable. She is faithful to her husband, and to her children. She takes care of her responsibilities, and when called upon to assist her husband, he can safely trust in her as did the husband of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31. She will not undo or un-preach, either by her life or her speech, what he is trying to do in the service of the Lord.

In verse 12 Paul returned to the deacons.

3:12 We come to requirement #7.

- 7) "The husband of one wife" -- He may have had several wives before he was saved, or have had mistresses, but since he was saved he must have settled down to one wife, and be proving himself faithful to her. It may be that the Apostle Paul was indicating that also he should be married. As I mentioned this in discussing elders, this is one point on which there are many different points of view.

The final requirement which is mentioned here is:

- 8) "Ruling their children and their own houses well" -- And for the same reason as Paul gave in verse 5.

It is clear that for a man to qualify as a leader in the church he must be pleasing the Lord in his own life, and he must be leading his family as a true man of God.

"Ruling" is the same word that Paul used in verses 4 and 5. He stands

before them, in control, leading them, teaching them, encouraging them, praying for them. He ministers at home just like he is expected to minister at the church.

3:13 The words, "have used the office of a deacon," are the translation of one word in the Greek. It is the verb from which we get the word, deacon. And it simply means that the men who serve as a deacon, and do what they are supposed to do "well," "purchase," or simply, obtain for themselves, "a good degree." It is a great honor, a humbling honor, to serve the Lord and His people as either an elder or a deacon. But the Apostle said that it is a special honor if a man qualifies, and then goes on to serve the Lord faithfully and efficiently in that office.

Paul was not thinking about a man hoping to move from being a deacon to an elder. That sometimes happens. But the deacon must not think in terms of serving well to get what he might consider to be a higher place of ministry. A deacon who serves the Lord well is deserving of the highest blessing that God can bestow upon any man, elder or deacon. We all need to aim at being faithful in what the Lord has given us to do. If the Lord sees fit to enlarge our ministry, that is up to Him. But the deacon who gives his life faithfully to serving the Lord in that office will be rewarded as highly as anyone else in the day when our works are judged.

An interesting thing about the first deacons is that among their number, two became preachers. One was Stephen, who became the first martyr, but who was a powerful preacher. It is said of him that the Jews "were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10). The other was Philip who ministered with great blessing to the Samaritans, and who had the great privilege of leading the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ as he explained to the eunuch who the prophet Isaiah was speaking about in Isaiah 53.

This may be what the Apostle Paul was thinking about when he concluded this section by saying that a deacon who serves the Lord well will also be given "great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." That certainly describes the ministries of both Stephen and Philip.

To serve the Lord well, whether as an elder or a deacon, or as any child of God, whether man or woman, requires "faith which is in Christ Jesus." By this expression Paul was not only indicating that we are to trust in the Lord, whatever we do, but that the faith we need to do our work well in His sight, and to continue to be faithful in our work--such faith must come from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So, whatever we are, and whatever we do, the glory must always be laid at the feet of our blessed Lord.

Concl: In these days when churches are so different from the pattern given to us in the Word of God, and church leaders are not usually chosen according to the standards set in 1 Timothy 3, we ought to realize that if we are to see the blessing of God again as it has been poured out in the past, we need to give greater emphasis to having godly leaders, and godly people in our churches, and that we may do the Lord's work in His way, not our own. May God enable us to believe that we have all we need in the Word to show us the way to real blessing and great fruitfulness.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 3:14-16

December 12, 1994

Intro: The last three verses of this chapter really give the purpose of this epistle. Paul wrote to tell Timothy how to be "a good minister of Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 4:6). The book of 1 Timothy contains what we would call today, Pastoral Theology. Every pastor should become thoroughly familiar with 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, and then refer to them often. The Lord has not left us to do His work any way that we might think is best. We must do the Lord's work in the Lord's way if we want to have the Lord's blessing.

The remainder of 1 Timothy can really be called:

### IV. PAUL'S CHARGES TO TIMOTHY CONCERNING HIS MINISTRY (1 Tim. 4:14-16).

And Paul began by writing about:

#### A. Timothy's behavior in the church of God (1 Tim. 3:14-16).

Or we could also call it, The purpose of the epistle. It was particularly directed to Timothy, showing what he needed to be, and how the work of the Lord in the church should be carried on. The information given in this letter is timeless. It is just as appropriate today as it was when Paul first wrote to Timothy, and it would be a great blessing to the church today if we would get back to these basic truths which Paul emphasized with Timothy and Titus in these epistles.

3:14 Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus while he went on to Macedonia. But it is clear from this verse that he did not intend to go long; he wanted to come back as soon as he could. But he indicated at the beginning of the next verse that he was writing just in case he couldn't get back when he hoped that he could. It would have been wonderful for Timothy to have been able to work with Paul in Ephesus, but, since they had to be separated, we believe, according to the will of God, Paul did not want to delay giving help to Timothy, and so he wrote to him. There is a great ministry in letter-writing, as the NT epistles show us.

Matthew Henry pointed out in his commentary that Paul was concerned that the work in Ephesus have a good foundation, and that it continue along in the right way. If churches are not started right, it is very, very difficult to change them later. People can sometimes get more attached to doing things the wrong way than they might be in doing things the right way. The trend in churches always seems to be down and away from the truth, and it is a constant battle for leaders to keep the work on track. And yet this is their calling and their responsibility before God.

3:15 But in the back of Paul's mind there was the thought that he might not get back to Ephesus as soon as he hoped that he would. The truth is that he never did get back. It was not long after this that he was imprisoned for the second time, and this led to his martyrdom according to the best historical research. What actually happened to Paul beyond the fact that he was arrested a second time, is not told us in the Word of God.

This ought to make us treasure the Pastoral Epistles even more because we have in them what Paul would have done if he could have been with Timothy and Titus. But since he wasn't able to carry out his plans to be with them, we can be thankful that he wrote to them.

We can see here that Paul was concerned about Timothy's behavior. The Greek word which is translated "behave" is the equivalent of the OT word walk, by which the Jews meant, to live. Paul was concerned about how Timothy would conduct himself, or behave himself "in the house of God." Timothy was in such a strategic place that his behavior would affect the quality of life among the Lord's people. He, as we have seen, was to be an example for the others to follow. And so it was extremely important that Timothy's life would be in order, and that he would lead the believers in Ephesus in the right way.

"In the house of God" -- We have to recognize that this was one of the most important names for the Tabernacle in the OT, and later for the Temple. They were called the house of God because that was the place where God dwelt among His people. In this passage Paul was calling the church, "the house of God," the church at Ephesus, the local church in the city of Ephesus. And he was not talking about a building because they probably did not have a building. He was talking about the people, the Lord's people, as they met together under the leadership of elders and deacons. They were the church at Ephesus.

The church is not mentioned very often in the NT epistles as the house of God, but the times it is mentioned as such are very important. See the following passages:

- 1) Heb. 3:1-6.
- 2) Heb. 10:21. Notice how this leads into Heb. 10:25.
- 3) 1 Pet. 4:17.

Now we have some light given to us in 2 Cor. 6 as to what Paul had in mind when he spoke of how Timothy was to behave in the house of God. Look with me at 2 Cor. 6, verses 14 through 18.

- 14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
- 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?
- 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
- 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
- 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

In verse 16 Paul was quoting from Lev. 26:12, which reads beginning with verse 11,

- 11 And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.
- 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

The presence of God is especially manifested among His people when they meet together. And it can be very powerful if the people of God are behaving in the way that is pleasing to the Lord. Good behavior in the church is holy behavior. It is being what the Lord wants us to be, and doing His work as He wants it to be done. And Paul said about such behavior that it is a must! "How thou oughtest" is a translation of the

word δεσφ which we had in 3:2, 7, and we will have it again (negatively) in 5:13. Proper behavior in the house of God is not optional, but it is a divine appointment which absolutely necessary for all of us who know the Lord.

So one distinctive thing about the church is that it is in the church that people should expect to find God. Another distinctive which Paul mentioned in this verse is that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." What does this mean?

December 13, 1994

These words have been applied to the church, to Timothy, and perhaps to others. It seems clear from the text that Paul was speaking of the church, and only of Timothy as a part of the church.

The word church is used in the NT in two ways:

- 1) Of the church as the body of Christ.
- 2) Of local churches.

Since Paul's concern in this epistle was for the local church in Ephesus, it seems best to apply this as basic to the ministry of every true, local church.

The word for "pillar" in the Greek, is used two other times in the NT: Gal. 2:9, and Rev. 3:12:

- 1) Gal. 2:9:

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

- 2) Rev. 3:12:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

From these two passages it seems to convey not only the idea of support, but also of authority (Gal. 2:9), and stability (Rev. 3:12).

Vine had this to say about a pillar: In Gal. 2:9--"of a local church as to its responsibility, in a collective capacity, to maintain the doctrines of the faith by teaching and practice." And regarding Rev. 3:12 that it is used of "a firm and permanent position."

The word "ground" appears only here in the NT. It speaks of the church as having a fixed purpose, and that is to be a stable and consistent supporter of the truth.

Putting the two together we can see that it is the ministry of the local church to proclaim, defend, and support the Word of God in its ministry. When a church departs from the Word, or even questions portions of the Word, it has departed from its God-given ministry. People should always be able to hear the Word at church, proclaimed in a positive, authoritative way, for the strengthening of the faith of believers, as well as for the salvation of those who do not know the Lord.

The Lord Jesus prayed in the prayer recorded for us in John 17, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth" (v. 17). He also said in John

14:6, "I am...the truth." So, if the church is to fulfill its ministry as "the pillar and ground of the truth," it must always stand faithfully for the Word of God, and see it as a revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Paul to say that the church is both "the pillar" and "the ground" of the truth, made it twice as strong as if he had said only one or the other since the two words actually amount to saying the same thing twice. Thus, it is a very strong, a very intense statement of the purpose of the church.

January 3, 1995

3:16 What is the connection between this verse and what has immediately preceded it in verse 15?

There are two very likely explanations:

- 1) Paul had just spoken of the church as being "the pillar and ground of the truth. Certainly there is no more important doctrine in all of Scripture than the doctrine of Christ. This doctrine must be proclaimed and upheld faithfully because the doctrine of Christ is the foundation of all of the truth of Scripture. If we forsake what the Bible teaches about Christ, no other doctrine will stand.
- 2) The other reason is that Paul had just spoken to Timothy about behavior in himself "in the house of God." The word which Paul uses to describe true Christian behavior is godliness. True Christian behavior produces godliness, and godliness, on the other hand, affects in a most profound and comprehensive way, our behavior. Furthermore, it is only through Christ that we can be godly people. Our Lord Jesus said when He was with His disciples shortly before His death, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5b). Paul told the Colossians that "Christ in you" is "the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). And later on in that same epistle he wrote of "Christ, our life" (Col. 3:4). In his epistle to the Philippians he said, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). The Christian life is not just a life in which we follow certain instructions, but it is a life of intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ in which the life of Christ is manifested in us. This is one point that sets our relationship with Christ apart from all religions--and we will never understand the Christian life until we understand this.

It seems, as T. A. Gurney pointed out in his commentary on 1 Timothy, that there are two things we can say about verse 16:

- 1) It is one of the earliest, possibly the earliest, statement of doctrine regarding Christ. This is what the early church believed about the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) The words are probably the words of an early Christian hymn. There is a certain rhythm to the statements of this verse which would lend itself to music. And then Gurney went on to say this:

The fact is rendered more likely when we remember that Ephesus and Asia Minor were the earliest home of Christian hymnology. Hymns are expressly named in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16). Perhaps a hymn is also quoted in another passage (Eph. v. 14). Pliny the younger, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, speaks of the Christians of Bithynia as singing hymns before daylight to Christ as God. Ignatius again, writing to the Ephesians, says, 'Do ye each and all of you form yourselves into a chorus, that being harmonious in accord, and taking the key-note of God, ye may in unison sing

with one voice through Jesus Christ unto the Father' (Gurney, T. A., The First Epistle to Timothy).

[Note: Pliny the younger was a Roman, governor of Bithynia from 109 to 111 A.D. Trajan was Emperor of Rome at the same time. Neither man was a Christian. Ignatius, on the other hand, was one of the early church fathers who served as one whom Philip Schaff called, "the distinguished bishop...of Antioch" (Vol. II, p. 47). He lived at the same time as Pliny and Trajan, but ultimately was condemned to death, taken to Rome, and fed to wild beasts in the Colosseum.]

From all that I have said about this sixteenth verse of 1 Timothy 3, we can see that it is a very important verse, and one which we need to understand and remember. The church today, as in every generation before us, and for all who will follow, is charged with the responsibility of maintaining this doctrine of Christ in its entirety and purity.

Paul called it, "the mystery of godliness." The word mystery has a special meaning in the NT. We have discussed this word before in some of our other studies, but let me review it briefly so that any who are not acquainted with its meaning may become familiar with this important NT word.

Most of you know that Lucille and I came to Portland with our family in 1951 to teach at the Multnomah School of the Bible. One of the first assignments I had for teaching was a course called, New Testament Mysteries. I had never studied them as such, and so I set out on what was to be one of the greatest blessings of my life. But the first thing that I had to do was to learn what a mystery is in Scripture.

To us, in everyday language, a mystery is, as it is defined in the dictionary, "Something that has not been, or cannot be, explained; hence, something beyond human comprehension" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, p. 660). But this is not its meaning in the New Testament.

Originally it seems that the word was used to speak of information which those in secret societies were given, but they were not to pass them on to the uninitiated. This is like what you will find in organizations like the Masonic order today.

One aspect of this applies to the use of the word in the NT because only those who know the Lord can possibly understand a New Testament mystery. Paul brought this out in his first letter to the church at Corinth. Please turn to 1 Cor. 2. I want to read the entire chapter to you. (Read.)

So a mystery is a revelation from God which can only be understood by the people of God as they are taught by the Spirit of God.

But let me add to that what Paul said in the last few verses of the book of Romans: Rom. 16:25-27. (Read.)

This helps us to understand that a mystery is truth which God kept secret "since the world began," but has now made it known in His Word, the New Testament, and it is expected that believers should know what these mysteries are!

And since we are studying an epistle which has to do with Timothy's work



in Ephesus, let me read what Paul wrote to that church about a New Testament mystery. Cf. Eph. 3:1-5. (Read.)

Now let me give you one more passage which helps us in understanding what a NT mystery is: Col. 1:25-29.

God's revelation to us of His Word has been progressive, and finally has been completed. The NT mysteries are the final part of that revelation. We are not speaking of truth in addition to Scripture, but the truth in Scripture. The NT mysteries give us truth not previously revealed, sometimes completing what had been revealed partially before; sometimes giving us truth which had not been revealed at all before.

Now here in 1 Tim. 3:16 we have "the mystery of godliness." Cf. 1 Tim. 6:3; Tit. 1:1. Godliness, of course, is not confined to the New Testament. There were many godly people of all ages in the OT. Godliness, remember, speaks of a person who has been attracted to God, one who wants to please God, and to become like God. The truth which we find in the NT which makes godliness possible is the truth concerning Christ. Godliness is impossible without Christ. And this truth is "great"--wonderful beyond anything that we could ever have expected. It is glorious, amazing. And you can add all of the other superlatives that you would like to. It is only in Christ that our way toward godliness can begin, and only in Christ can it ever be realized. "Great is the mystery of godliness." And this is truth which must be supported by the church without question, without any addition or any subtraction. Godliness is through Christ alone--nothing more, nothing less, no one else and nothing else.

January 9, 1995

The words godly or godliness appear ten times in 1 Timothy: 1:4; 2:2, 10; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11. It speaks of a person who wants to be like God. Therefore, he is attracted to God, wants to know God, and he wants to please God. So far we have learned specifically that men are to be godly (see 2:8 where the expression that Paul used is "holy hands"). In verse 2:10 it is clear that a Christian woman was one who professed godliness. That is, she verbally expressed herself as one who was not only a Christian, but as one who wanted to be a godly Christian. It is obvious in chapter 3 that elders were to be godly, that deacons were to be godly, and that deacons wives were to be godly. In 4:12-16 we see that Paul intended for Timothy to be godly. So, when you put all of this together you can see that every child of God is supposed to be holy. Every child of God is supposed to be godly.

But we are about to learn (if we did not already know) that there can be no godliness without Christ! Paul made it clear to Timothy in the very first chapter that one thing false doctrine cannot do is to make people holy. See 1:4. And that was at least one of the reasons why Paul was so concerned about the false teaching that invaded Ephesus, and had become a problem to the church.

Notice how in at least three passages Paul introduced the subject of godliness when he was speaking about false doctrine:

- 1) 1 Tim. 1:3, 4.
- 2) 1 Tim. 4:7, 8.
- 3) 1 Tim. 6:3-5, and then v. 11.

Godliness requires Christ. If a person turns to false doctrine, he turns from Christ, and if he turns from Christ there is no way that he can be

godly. And this is what we come to in this verse: Godliness, holiness is dependent upon what Christ did when he came to earth. Look at verse 16 with me for a moment.

You will see that there are six statements, all of which have to do with Christ. The first speaks of His coming into the world; the last speaks of His departure back to glory, or heaven.

Furthermore, there are three pairs of statements which are in contrast with each other. Fausset pointed this out in his commentary in the JFB set, Vol. VI, p. 490.

- 1) In the first two we have "flesh" and "Spirit."
- 2) In the next two we have "angels" and "Gentiles."
- 3) In the third and last we have "the world" and "glory," or heaven.

And all of these have to do with Christ. He was the One Who was manifested in the flesh. He was the One Who was "justified in the Spirit." Christ was the One Who was "seen of angels." He was "preached unto the Gentiles." He was "believed on in the world." And, finally, He was "received up into glory." So this statement begins with the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it concludes with His glorification. These two, and all that happened between them, is the price that the Lord paid that we might be godly. Therefore, let us be always on the lookout for anything that even tends to draw us away from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us look at the statements.

"GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH" -- The best MSS have simply, He was manifest in the flesh. The NIV translates this, "He appeared in a body." But that does not seem to do justice to the Greek text. The word manifest suggests that our Lord not only came into the world as a human being, but, in coming, He manifested what He was before He was born. It is a statement which declares His true humanity without taking away His Deity.

We all know, or should know, that our Lord did not come into being when He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. You and I had no existence at all before we were conceived. The Lord Jesus did! He is the eternal and glorious Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. But He came to earth as a man. Paul described the nature and birth of our Lord in those wonderful words in Philippians 2. Speaking of Christ, he wrote:

- 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
- 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
- 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:6-8).

We would never speak of the birth of a child in this way. We do not say that a certain baby was "manifest in the flesh." This would mean that he was more than human, that he had had some existence before his birth. But this was only true of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This statement was obviously designed, not only to direct special attention to the uniqueness of Christ, but also to show what was necessary for God and for Christ to do if even a single sinner were to be made godly. Godliness is a part of the whole "divine scheme" (Fausset, VI, p. 489) of our salvation. It would never have been possible for anyone to become godly by his own works. That is why Christ had to come.

But how do we know that this was not simply what some enthusiastic disciples decided to say about Jesus of Nazareth? Keep in mind that Paul was answering and exposing the doctrines of the false teachers who were troubling the Ephesian believers.

Well, a major answer to that question is the Jesus was "JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT."

The Greek text was not written with capital letters so we could tell that Paul was speaking about the Holy Spirit. The translators of the KJV capitalized it meaning that they believed that Paul was referring to the Holy Spirit. Some expositors believe that he was speaking about the human spirit of our Lord. But I agree with the KJ. The old ASV is the only reliable translation I know of which printed spirit with a small s.

But this statement raises questions, doesn't it? If our Lord were the Son of God Who came to earth as a Man without losing or even experiencing any change in His Deity, then why did He need to be justified?

Here we need to remember the basic meaning of the word justify. It means to declare righteous. In our Lord's case it did not have to mean that He was a sinner, and then made righteous. It simply means that by the Spirit's relationship with the Lord in connection with His ministry, He was continually giving His testimony that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Righteous One, as the first statement said, God who had come to earth as a Man. The Holy Spirit did not make our Lord righteous; He simply gave testimony in many ways that Jesus Christ was truly God.

Let us look at the evidence in Scripture:

- 1) The Lord Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-21). And this was in fulfillment of the Spirit's prophecy in Isa. 7:14 (because in compiling the Scriptures men of God, according to the Apostle Peter, spoke as they were moved upon, or borne along, by the Spirit. Cf. 2 Pet. 1:20, 21).
- 2) After the days of Mary's purification were completed (33 days according to Lev. 12:4), Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to the temple to present him as their firstborn to the Lord. When they did, an amazing thing happened. Read Luke 2:22-35. Here the Holy Spirit was working with Simeon, and he by the Spirit spoke prophetically about the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit was justifying our Lord to Simeon, and Joseph and Mary were learning from the Spirit also.
- 3) He was anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Matt. 3:16, 17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22). But the significance of all of this is made even stronger when we read what the Apostle John wrote about the baptism of our Lord. Cf. John 1:29-34.
- 4) Our Lord was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil--which He would never do to us. This was not to see if the Lord would sin, but to show that He would not, and could not, sin, and so to justify. Cf. Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1.
- 5) Our Lord did His work under the power of the Spirit. Cf. Luke 4:14, 16-19; also Matt. 12:29; Acts 1:2. So He taught and performed His miracles with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would have had no part in our Lord's ministry if He had been an impostor.
- 6) Our Lord was raised from the dead by the Spirit (1 Pet. 3:18). Notice that the Holy Spirit by His convicting work continues to justify our Lord by His convicting the world of righteousness. Cf. John 16:8, 10.
- 7) The Spirit continues to justify the Lord by witnessing of Him and glorifying Him. Cf. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-15.

Thus, we see how the Spirit of God continually justified our Lord during our Lord's earthly ministry, and He continues to justify the Lord by convicting sinners that He truly is the Son of God. Remember what the Apostle Paul said about the Holy Spirit and His ministry concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in 1 Cor. 12:3:

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

The Lord's incarnation exposed Him to the charge, the misapprehension, that He was no more than a man; His justification by the Spirit was, as Fausset said, His vindication that He was truly the Son of God in human flesh. This is what it means that the Holy Spirit justified our Lord. No one has ever had the relationship with the Spirit that our Lord had while He was here on earth. And even now, the Holy Spirit ministers to us, confirming in our hearts that He is the Son of God, and telling us what the Lord Jesus wants us to know.

January 10, 1995

The third statement the Apostle Paul wrote was that our Lord was "seen of angels."

There never has been a time in human history when the ministry of angels has been more apparent than during the ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth. Angels, of course, are always active, but their activities are not generally consciously observed by those of us who live on the earth. But during our Lord's ministry He was "seen of angels."

"Seen" does not just mean a voluntary or casual observation, but that the angels gazed upon Him in wonder. And implied in the verb is also the idea that the angels looked, and continued to look upon Him. So says Strong. Evidently the angels, who had seen the Lord in his pre-incarnate glory, were amazed to see Him in His humanity, but, nevertheless, they never had any doubt but that He was the eternal Son of God.

The following is a general summary of the activities of angels during our Lord's time on earth:

- 1) It was the angel Gabriel who announced and predicted to Mary that she would have a Son, Jesus, Who would also be "the Son of the Highest" and that He would occupy "the throne of his father David." Cf. Luke 1:26-38. The only other book in which Gabriel is mentioned is the book of Daniel, 8:16 and 9:21, where he explained revelations which were given to Daniel. But it is significant that the announcement of our Lord's birth was not made by special revelation for some man to give to Mary, but an angel told Mary what was going to happen to her. We would have to say that Gabriel would not have told Mary what he told her if he had not believed that what he said was true.
- 2) It was "the angel of the Lord" who told Joseph not to hesitate to take Mary to be his wife because the child which she had conceived was not by some man, but by the Holy Spirit. Cf. Matt. 1:18-25. In addition, the Matthew account tells us that this was all in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Isa. 7:14.
- 3) It was the angel of the Lord who announced the birth of the Lord Jesus to the shepherds. And after the announcement "a multitude of the heavenly host, angels, glorified God for what this would mean in heaven and on earth. Cf. Luke 2:8-20.
- 4) Angels ministered to the Lord following His temptation. Cf. Matt.

4:11; Mark 1:13.

- 5) When Peter started to defend the Lord against His enemies, the Lord said this which is recorded for us in Matt. 26:52, 53:

52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

The number in a legion differed from time to time. Thayer says that at the time of Augustus Caesar it amounted to 6,826--6,100 men on foot, 726 on horseback. So twelve times that number would be at least 81,912 angels, and the Lord said "more than..." In 2 Kings 19 we are told what God did during Hezekiah's reign to deliver His people from the Assyrians. The account reads like this:

32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses (2 Kings 19:32-35).

Sometimes in the OT, the angel of the Lord is Christ, but there is nothing in this passage to indicate that this was any more than an angel. If one angel could do this, think of the defense that the Lord would have had from over 80,000 angels!

- 6) Probably the most important thought in the expression, "seen of angels," was at the time of the resurrection of our Lord. Angels were the first to testify of the resurrection of our Lord, and this probably means that they were the only ones to actually see the Lord raised from the dead. Cf. Matt. 28:1-7; Mark 16:5-8; Luke 24:4-9. See also John 20:11-18.

We can add two other points which have to do with angels following our Lord's resurrection:

- 7) Angels witnessed our Lord's ascension and predicted that He would return. See Acts 1:9-11.  
8) The Lord Jesus Himself predicted that when He returned He would be accompanied by "his angels" (Matt. 16:27).

Now we can say about the angels what I have said about the Holy Spirit. If the Lord Jesus had been only a man, you would not have seen such a display of angelic support along with all of the confirmations that He was the Son of God.

The fourth statement which Paul made, that our Lord was "preached unto the Gentiles." This would not only mean that salvation was for the Gentiles, but that godliness was for the Gentiles, too--those who would be saved. This marked a major change in the ministry of the Word. Gentiles had been saved before, but never before the coming of our Lord had the door of salvation been thrown wide open to the Gentiles. And this is what led to one of the greatest controversies which the NT church had to face. Jewish

believers had a difficult time accepting the fact that Gentiles could be saved without submitting, at least in some ways, to the Mosaic Law.

January 16, 1995

We notice our Lord's instructions to His disciples when He first sent them out. Cf. Matt. 10:5, 6. After naming the twelve apostles, Matthew recorded the following:

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Our Lord ministered to Gentiles while He was here on earth, but the contacts were initiated by the Gentiles. See the following:

- 1) The Roman centurion who appealed to the Lord on behalf of his servant who was sick with palsy, and greatly tormented by it. Cf. Matt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10. And in this passage the Lord indicated that a ministry to Gentiles was coming.
- 2) The Syrophenician woman who appealed to the Lord on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter. Cf. Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.
- 3) We don't know what happened to the centurion who was present at the crucifixion of our Lord, but we know that he recognized that the Lord was the Son of God. Cf. Matt. 27:54:

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

See also Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47--Luke records that he said the Lord was a righteous man.

- 4) John recorded in his Gospel about the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus, but it is not said that the Lord saw them. Cf. John 12:20-22.

The Apostle John, who wrote close to the end of the first century, gave an indication of a coming ministry to the Gentiles. Cf. John 1:11-13. See also John 10:15, 16. And we know that the Lord must have been thinking about the Gentiles who would believe on Him, as well as other Jews, when He prayed as He did in the prayer recorded in John 17, verse 20:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

But the inclusion of the Gentiles is beyond question when the Lord gave what we call the Great Commission. Cf. Mark 16:15:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

In Matthews account we have these words in chapter 28, verses 18-20:

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And there is still more evidence in Acts 1:8:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

After our Lord's ascension, the Apostles began their work in Jerusalem, and gradually it spread out into all of the Empire. Since then missionaries have gone throughout the world preaching the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike.

We have two indication in the book of Acts of the Apostles going to the Gentiles:

- 1) Peter going to the house of Cornelius, another Roman centurion, where he preached the Gospel to them and many were saved. Cf. Acts 10, 11.
- 2) After this, on Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas when they were to the Gentile city, Antioch in Pisidia, Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews in the synagogue where evidently Gentile proselytes were present. After Paul concluded his message, Luke reported the following:

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region (Acts 13:43-49).

The Apostle Paul was commissioned by God as "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13). The whole verse says this:

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

In writing to the Galatians Paul made the same claim. He spoke of meeting with those who were apostles before him concerning the preaching that he had done among the Gentiles. The apostles were satisfied with both Paul's message and his mission, and had no criticism nor would they suggest any changes. Then Paul said this:

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen [i.e., the Gentiles], and they unto the circumcision (Gal. 2:7-9).

The NT contains a number of references to the salvation of Gentiles, both in history, as well of prophecies that Gentiles would be brought to the Lord. We have the salvation of Rahab and Ruth, both Gentiles, and who

both became a part of the human family of our Lord Jesus Christ. Another is Naaman the Syrian, plus all of the Gentiles who were saved under the ministry of Jonah when he went to Nineveh.

Then we are told that our Lord Jesus Christ was "believed on in the world." This is the fifth statement in 1 Tim. 3:16. This means that both Jews and Gentiles put their trust in our Lord; they were saved! It does not mean that all who heard the Gospel believed, but there were many who did.

The fact that anybody at any period in human history has believed in the Lord is a miracle of God's grace when we realize that "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). And so when we find people seeking the Lord, we know that God has been at work in their hearts. Furthermore, we know that we all by nature were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). If we are spiritually dead we do not have the ability to believe. We can't take a single step toward God, nor can we do a single thing to please God. But we are told in Eph. 2:8, 9 that faith is "the gift of God." In Rom. 10:17 Paul told the Romans church that faith comes through the Word of God. That is God's way of giving us the gift of faith. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is "the author and finisher of our faith." So the credit, the glory, for our faith belongs, not to us, but to the Lord.

January 23, 1995

So we can say that by faith:

- 1) We are justified before God. See Acts 13:38-39.  
 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:  
 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.  
 Also cf. Rom. 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith..."
- 2) By faith we have eternal life. Cf. John 3:14-16, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent..."
- 3) All of salvation--justification, sanctification, and glorification--is included under faith. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:8, 9:  
 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:  
 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.  
 See also Acts 16:30, 31. When the Lord shook the Philippian jail with an earthquake, the jailor was awakened, and seeing the prison doors open thought that all of the prisoners had escaped, and so he took out his sword to kill himself. Paul shouted that they were all there. Then the jailor came to them, fell down before them, and asked what he should do to be saved. Paul's response was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..."  
 The Apostle Paul also indicated that faith is followed by the sealing of the Spirit:  
 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,  
 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:13-14).



The last statement of 1 Tim. 3:16 is that our Lord was "received up into glory." This means that He was received back into heaven, an indication of the Father's acceptance of His work on the Cross. Christ had successfully put away our sins, and so He was "received" back into heaven.

Many things were accomplished by our Lord's resurrection, as by His death. And intimately related to His acceptance with God, is our acceptance. Our Lord's resurrection guaranteed our resurrection, and His glorification guarantees ours as well. Our Lord prayed that those whom the Father had given to Him might be with Him in glory that they might behold His glory. And what will be the result of this? John, the Apostle, said that when we see Him we shall be like Him. We are being changed "from glory to glory" now, but the work of sanctification will be completed in glorification when we see the Lord. Glorification is complete godliness! And so for our Lord to be "received up into glory" is our guarantee that the work of godliness in us will one day be completed when we see the Lord.

This is why Paul could write what he did in the next chapter of 1 Timothy --chapter 4, verse 8. (Read.)

So Paul in speaking of our Lord in these six statements not only showed that godliness is possible for us, but that this is what we as believers need to be primarily concerned about in the house of God, the church of the living God. The church needs godly leaders (elders and deacons), and godly leaders will be used by the Spirit of God to produce a godly people, people who want to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. If we cannot honestly say that we want to be like the Lord, we had better take a long, deep look into our hearts to make sure that we are saved.

These verses (3:14-16) show that the appeal for godliness is clearly Paul's purpose in writing to Timothy. Timothy was expected to be godly. The elders and deacons were required to be godly. And all of the people of God were expected to follow the example of their leaders in seeking to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. May that be our purpose in life, too.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 4:1-11

January 23, 1995

Intro: This entire epistle, like the one which follows, was written to Timothy so that he would have a written record from the Apostle Paul as to how the work of the Lord was to be done. And these epistles (including Titus) continue to show God's will concerning the ministry of the church, the local church. It is just as appropriate for us as for the church in the first century. And these three epistles will continue to be the guide books for pastors and churches until the Lord comes and takes us all to heaven. So, if we are to have the blessing of God, we need to know how to do the work of the Lord in the Lord's way. The tendency of churches today is to chart their own course, do things their way, rather than giving serious attention to these epistles. Every young pastor should make a careful study of these epistles, and older pastors need to be reading them continually to keep reminded of how God wants His work to be done.

You can see as you read through this epistle that this was really a personal letter to Timothy. Paul said in 3:14, "These things I write unto thee." And in the verses that we are coming to we find expressions like we see in verses 6, 7, and 10. And the last five verses of the chapter are certainly for Timothy with respect to his own personal life and ministry. But just as the letters to the various churches were not intended just for those churches, but for the people of God throughout the church age, so these epistles to Timothy and Titus alone, but were given by the Holy Spirit through Paul to Timothy and Titus for the church in every generation. And although the emphasis in the church today is for change, that is not anything that we have the right to do. The world may get worse and worse (as it has), but the work of the church remains the same, and the pastors and churches which follow these epistles, are sure to experience the blessing of God.

In the verses before us (4:1-11) we find Paul directing Timothy again concerning the false teachers and false teaching that he could expect to see in an increasing way. The same is needed today. The Devil is a master at getting the church diverted into strange paths, and following strange teaching. I have often seen, as perhaps you have, that unless a new convert is carefully shepherded by the church, it may be easier for that person to follow false teaching than to follow true doctrine. The church is often the very place where false teaching is spread. And it is usually so subtle that many are not even aware of what is going on.

Let us see what the Apostle Paul had to say to Timothy.

4:1 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly" -- Paul was claiming divine inspiration and authority for what he was about to write. This is the very reason that the Bible is such an important book. It is the Word of God. We will finally come to Paul's classic statement on the nature of Scripture in 2 Tim. 3, verses 16, 17. In 2 Pet. 1:20, 21 we learn that the scriptures are not of human origin, but men of God gave us the OT scriptures "as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." And the same is true of the NT. It is not a human production. Men could never write such a book. We are incapable of producing a book like this. It is a revelation from God! And so we are not to pass judgement upon the Word, but we are to read it in faith knowing that it cannot be wrong. To question the Word of God is the height of folly.

The Spirit of God has not only spoken, but He has spoken "expressly"--

meaning directly and distinctly, clearly, definitely, explicitly. He has not left us in the dark concerning the Enemy which we face.

We often hear it said that the Bible is hard to understand--and it is if we are trying to figure it out on our own. But when the Holy Spirit is teaching us, we see how clear the truth of God is. He speaks "expressly."

But, in spite of this, the work of those who spread false teaching will be successful because "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." Remember that "the faith" is a NT expression which speaks of true doctrine, the truth of God. And that is exactly what the Devil wants to do; he wants to get us away from the Word of God. If he can do that, he can keep us in the dark. Light comes from the Scriptures.

Paul began writing about false teachers and their teaching early in his ministry because in Thessalonica, probably some twelve years before Paul wrote to Timothy, he had to respond to a letter which somebody had sent to the church at Thessalonica, saying that the Day of the Lord had come, and they had apparently either signed Paul's name to the letter, or claimed that the message had come from him. See 2 Thess. 2:2. So all through Paul's ministry he was constantly facing false doctrine, seeking to protect the Lord's people from error.

See also 2 Tim. 3:5; 4:3-5.

Now the reason that it is important to teach the Word is because the only way we can be aware that false doctrine is being taught is by knowing true doctrine. When pastors fail to teach the Word, they are asking for trouble.

Now in the latter part of this verse we see where false teaching comes from. It comes from "seducing spirits" and "devils," or, more correctly, demons. We can't see these enemies, but they are continually doing their evil work.

At this point we need to remember how Paul described our warfare when he wrote to the Ephesian church. He exhorted the believers to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." He told them to "put on the whole armour of God" so that we "may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." And then after discussing the armor that we need to put on, he stressed the necessity of prayer: "Praying always with all prayer..." BUT WHY? Here is the answer:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12).

The Holy Spirit warns us in Scripture about our enemies, showing us that one thing which makes it so difficult to withstand them is the fact that we can't see them. But they are there! They are everywhere, and especially where the Word is being taught--but also where it is not taught. And so Paul gave this further word of instruction concerning our warfare in 2 Cor. 10:3-6:

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth

itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

Can you see from this why Paul was placing such a heavy emphasis upon the need for godliness in the church? Only godly people can possibly wage a winning warfare.

What are "seducing spirits"? They are demonic spirits, fallen angels, who seek to lead us astray by deceiving us. In Gen. 3 when the Devil tempted Eve, he was acting as a seducing spirit. He was even acting as a seducing spirit when He tempted our Lord. The main instrument which the Devil and his demons use against us is deceit. And, as the Devil showed in Gen. 3, he has his own doctrine to increase the possibility of deceiving us. But it is not the truth of God; it is the "doctrines of devils," of demons.

These are the unseen enemies we have which are behind all false teaching. And from Paul's statement here, as well as in 2 Tim. 3, it seems that the farther we go along in time, the more false teaching there will be.

The bad thing that the Apostle Paul had to say about these "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" is not just that there are such beings, and that they are doing such things, but the sad thing is that they will be successful in causing people who have been in local churches to "depart from the faith." And there seems to be a finality in this statement which means that they will depart, and they won't come back! None of us can say that everyone in our churches is saved. But at least they are under the teaching of the Word of God, and there is always the possibility that they will be saved as they learn more about the Word. But when they depart, they are no longer under the teaching of God's Word, that is, if they are attending a church which teaches the Word.

How prayerful we need to be about the ministry of our churches, and how careful we need to be that our people are really being taught the great doctrines of the faith!

But let us go on to verse 2.

4:2 Here it seems that Paul moved on from the unseen "seducing spirits" to write about the visible false teachers. He was moving from the invisible world to the visible, the human instruments which the "seducing spirits" were using to accomplish their evil objectives.

January 24, 1995

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy" -- From Titus 1, beginning with what Paul told Titus about the responsibility of elders with regard to the Word of God (v. 9), he went on to indicate that most of the false teaching was coming from "the circumcision" (Tit. 1:10), that their mouths must be stopped because they were subverting whole families, and were doing it primarily for money. It is reasonable to think that what was going on in Crete where Titus was, was also taking place in Ephesus where Timothy was.

The false teachers were not sincere; they were hypocrites. The Lord condemned the Pharisees of His day for their hypocrisy. They can teach error like it was the truth, but they do it because their consciences have been "seared with a hot iron." This is a Greek word for cauterizing where

skin is made insensitive by the use of "a hot iron." There is even the idea of branding a person in this expression. One of the marks of a false teacher is that his conscience has been violated so much that it is not longer functioning. There is usually, perhaps always, a story to be told concerning every false teacher. He has either rejected the truth in favor of error, or in his personal life he has repeatedly chosen sin when his conscience at first told him that he was doing the wrong thing. It is hard for a godly person to understand how some people can go on in sin, and not be bothered by it. Here Paul gives the reason. Such a condition is obviously the result of the judgment of God, and it seems in most instances that such people never recover from their sin. It should make all of us realize what a serious thing it is to compromise with the truth in any way.

4:3 Here we have a sample of the false teaching that was being promoted in Ephesus. Matthew Henry wrote:

It is a sign that men have departed from the faith when they will command what God has forbidden, such as saint and angel or demon-worship; and forbid what God has allowed or commanded, such as marriage and meats (Matthew Henry, VI, p. 819).

"Forbidding to marry" -- We know that in 1 Corinthians 7 the Apostle Paul expressed his attitude toward marriage. He never married, but he never had forbidden anyone else to get married. It is normal for men and women to be married. Marriage is a safeguard against fornication. But some, like Paul, are not troubled that way. And so Paul recommended that if a person were able to refrain from marriage he would have more time to devote to the Lord. See especially 1 Cor. 7:32-35. But the scriptural truth still stands, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" (Prov. 18:22).

Clearly, "forbidding to marriage" is contrary to Scripture, and those who demand such a thing are forbidding what God has blessed.

The same is true of "commanding to abstain from meats." This seems to identify the false teachers in Ephesus, as was the case so often, as Judaizers--Jews who may have professed faith in Christ, but who in their hearts were still clinging to the Law of Moses. Certain foods were forbidden under the Law, but that is no longer true under grace.

Again, it is true that Paul discouraged the eating of meat offered to idols. He discussed this in 1 Corinthians 8. He could eat such meat which was sold in the market place, but he did not want to risk causing a weaker brother to stumble. And so he said that he would "eat no flesh while the world standeth" (1 Cor. 8:13). If the false teachers were to lift this verse out of its context they could say that Paul was teaching that believers should not eat meat. They ignore the rest of the verse where Paul concluded, "lest I make my brother to offend," i.e., stumble.

Both of these points which Paul was making, first regarding marriage, and then concerning eating, are good illustrations that false teaching is the result of taking some truth in Scripture and expanding it beyond the place that it has in the Word of God. We need to be just as careful about this as we are about those teachers who deny what is clearly taught in the Bible. How important it is, therefore, that we know what the Word teaches!

When Paul said here that God has "created" animals "to be received with thanksgiving," he was not contradicting what he had said in 1 Corinthians about meat offered to idols. He is stating here a general truth which, under certain circumstances, must be limited. But as a general rule of Scripture we are to receive what God has provided "with thanksgiving" in the light of what we "believe and know" of "the truth," i.e., of the Word of God.

4:4 Here again we have the basic truth of Scripture. (Read.) This means that our attitude toward food is to be positive, not negative. The believers in the church were clearly not under the restrictions regarding food that was required by the Mosaic Law. We are free from all of that. And so with liberty we eat, being careful that we receive our food "with thanksgiving" to God. This surely teaches us to give thanks for our food when we sit down to eat. And the practice among Russian Christians is good, too--that of giving thanks when the meal is finished as well as at the beginning. Probably believers in other countries do the same. It would be good for us to follow their example.

The explanation for what Paul has said in verses 3 and 4 is given in verse 5.

4:5 I like what Matthew Henry has written on this subject:

3. What God has created is to be received with thanksgiving. We must not refuse the gifts of God's bounty, nor be scrupulous in making differences where God has made none; but receive them, and be thankful, acknowledging the power of God the Maker of them, and the bounty of God the giver of them: Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, v. 4. This plainly sets us at liberty from all the distinctions of meats appointed by the ceremonial law, as particularly that of swine's flesh, which the Jews were forbidden to eat, but which is allowed to us Christians, by this rule, Every creature of God is good, etc. Observe, God's good creatures are then good, and doubly sweet to us, when they are received with thanksgiving.-- For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer, v. 5. It is a desirable thing to have a sanctified use of our creature-comforts. Now they are sanctified to us,

(1.) By the word of God; not only his permission, allowing us the liberty of the use of these things, but his promise to feed us with food convenient for us. This gives us a sanctified use of our creature-comforts.

(2.) by prayer, which blesses our meat to us. The word of God and prayer must be brought to our common actions and affairs, and then we do all in faith. Here observe,

[1.] Every creature is God's, for he made all. Every beast in the forest is mine (says God), and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine, <Ps. 50:10-11>.

[2.] every creature of God is good: when the blessed God took a survey of all his works, God saw all that was made, and, behold, it was very good, <Gen. 1:31>.

[3.] the blessing of God makes every creature nourishing to us; man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God <Mt. 4:4>, and therefore nothing ought to be refused.

[4.] we ought therefore to ask his blessing by prayer, and so to sanctify the creatures we receive by prayer (Matthew Henry, VI, pp.

821, 822).

All of this does not mean that we should not avoid foods which may make us sick, nor that we should not follow the advice of our doctors who say that for the sake of our health there are certain things that we should not eat. But our attitude toward marriage should be positive, and our attitude toward food should be positive as well. We are not people who are in bondage; God has set us free. And we need to enjoy our freedom in the Lord, but always careful that we are not using our freedom as an occasion for sinning. This is the warning that Paul gave to the Galatians in Galatians, chapter 5. Let me read two verses to you.

Gal. 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Gal 5:13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Now, having said all of this, Paul addressed himself to Timothy in verse 6 with respect to his responsibility toward these subjects of marriage and eating, and what he was always to do if he were to be "a good minister of Jesus Christ..."

4:6 Pastors are not to deal with the truths of the Word of God, and then be afraid to come back to the same truths again. Instead we are to remind the Lord's people continually of things that we have told them, things which they need to remember, and this especially the case when the need arises for certain truths. Putting the Lord's people in remembrance of the truth is a major responsibility of every pastor.

There are many examples of this in Scripture. Probably the classic example is to be found in 2 Pet. 1:12-15. Let me read those verses for you:

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

The Lord's Supper, which we are to observe over and over, was instituted by our Lord so that we would not forget Him. "This do in remembrance of Me."

So a good pastor must not be afraid to repeat himself. This does not mean, however, that he stops studying, and simply repeats the same sermons over and over. But it does mean that, in the course of an on-going ministry, he is must not hesitate to go back and emphasize truths which he has taught before--especially when he knows that there is a need to repeat. To do so, Paul said, is to be "a good minister of Jesus Christ."

"Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" -- It seems here that Paul was speaking about Timothy. He needed to be a man who not only was instructed in the truth in the past, but who was continually being nourished "in the words of faith and of good doctrine." The NASB says,

"constantly nourished."

What does it mean to be nourished? It means that Timothy, and all pastors, were to be continually feeding themselves on the words and the teaching of Scripture. It is a tragedy of the first order when any pastor stops growing. The Greek has, the words of the faith.

Perhaps the difference suggested by Paul between "the words" and the "doctrine" can be explained as meaning that Timothy need to pay attention to the smallest details of the Scriptures, "the words," but that he needed to be able also to put the details together so as to understand the "good doctrine" of the Word of God. And here, by the words, "whereunto thou hast attained," Timothy was being reminded that he could only lead his people as far in the truth as he had gone. And this meant not only a doctrinal knowledge of the truth, but his own personal conformity to the truth in character and life.

Matthew Henry reminded his readers that Paul was not, and would not, encourage Timothy to "advance new notions" (VI, 820), but his work was to keep the people of God reminded of truth which they already knew. And then he went on to remind his readers that the Apostle Peter emphasized this as well. Peter did not encourage the people he was writing to, to seek something new, but he wanted them to be constantly reminded of the things which he had taught them. And that is why he wrote as he did in the passage I read to you a moment ago in 2 Pet. 1:12-16.

All of this is very instructive for the servant of the Lord, both with respect to his own life as well as for his teaching.

January 30, 1995

4:7 Timothy was not to debate the truth with those who were spreading false doctrine, but they were to reject it from the very start--reject it outright! It was "profane," i.e., ungodly, not true, defiled. They were myths such as silly (implied) "old wives" would tell. It does not seem to indicate that women were responsible for the false teaching, but it was such as one might expect from old, superstitious women.

As we look at all that the Apostle Paul had said about the false teaching that apparently was going on in Ephesus, it was not one simple doctrine, but either many, or a combination of many. See 1:4; 4:4; and now what we have in this verse, "profane and old wives' fables," myths. False doctrine is never edifying, but instead it is destructive because it leads people astray and produces discussions which are anything but spiritually profitable. Much time can be wasted in such discussions, time which could be used in a better way. Usually false teachers are out to convert us, and their hearts are not open to the truth. So we are simply to reject them and all that they have to say. If the Lord is dealing with them, they may come back later with a different attitude.

In these days when millions of people are pushing exercise to the limit, it is interesting to find this in the word of God. There are several references to sports in the Bible, and often in connection with the truth. Paul likened the Christian life to a race when he wrote to the Corinthian church. Cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-27:

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in



all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

And then we have Heb. 12:1,

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

So Paul was not saying that bodily exercise is wrong. But he was saying that it is not to become a god with us. Men and women will go to gymnasiums and work out lifting weights, using all kinds of exercise machines, swimming, playing basketball. We have our joggers who are on the road early in the morning, all during the day, and even into the night. Now Paul will mention in verse eight that "bodily exercise profiteth little," i.e., for a little while. And he was speaking of this life as a little while. Or it can simply mean that it does help a little, or is of limited value. And this is because it only has to do with this life. Men and women will put out money, time, and energy for the development of their bodies, but will do absolutely nothing to prepare their souls for eternity. This is nothing but sheer tragedy.

Paul said here in verse 7 that Timothy needed to "exercise" himself "rather unto godliness." This means that he was to be just as devoted to the godliness of his life as other people are to the development and care of their bodies. The NIV renders it, "But train yourself to be godly." The NASB translates it like this: "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness."

And so, while we can pity those who devote so much time and energy to the development of their bodies, we can also learn from them. Are we as faithful in Bible reading and prayer as people today are in making sure they get exercise for their bodies? Are we just as concerned, or even more so, about our souls as they are about their bodies? When you see joggers out running even in the rain, or when it is so hot that you would think that they would drop from exhaustion, how does our exercising for godliness compare? Get your physical exercise, but be even more careful to exercise yourself unto godliness. Paul would commend you for being in a Bible class because in a Bible class you are exercising yourself unto godliness if you are a doer as well as a hearer.

But let us go on to verse 8.

4:8 Here is the explanation we have been talking about. Those who give most of their attention to their bodies, but none to their souls, are not only losing out eternally, but even as far as this life is concerned. And that is because "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Let us consider that middle statement: "Having promise of the life that now is."

Look at what Paul wrote in 6:6. Think about Phil. 4:6, 7, 13. And what about Heb. 13:5, 6? And then we have Rom. 8:28. The Word of God is full of promises that we rely on constantly, promises of a never-failing God

which the world knows nothing about. And the more godly we are, the more we get out of the promises.

And then what about the time when death comes? Cf. Psa. 23:4, "Yea, though I walk through the valley..." And then verses 5 and 6 in the same Psalm.

I recently had the funeral of a lady whose family could only tell me this: "She was a good lady. She loved to play cards and bingo, but she wouldn't let us talk to her about the Lord."

Some people live for money. But in the words of the Lord Jesus,  
36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole  
world, and lose his own soul?  
37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul (Mark  
8:36-37)?

Timothy was to teach these things to the people of Ephesus, but first of all he was to make sure that he was practicing what he would preach. It is so easy to know what we should do, and to be able to tell others what they should do, but fail to do it ourselves. Take good care of your body, but take even better care of your soul. Instead of just living for time, live for time and for eternity, but of the two, place your strongest efforts toward eternity.

4:9 The false teachers gave doctrine that was not true, and not worthy to be accepted by anyone. The teacher of the Word of God teaches the truth, and everyone should listen to what he has to say, and accept it.

This is the third time Paul has used this expression in 1 Timothy. Cf. 1:15; 3:1; and here.

And it is true the godliness is profitable NOW even though Paul had to go on to say what he wrote in verse 10. Let us see what it is.

4:10 The people who "trust in the living God" are never popular in this world--if they are really taking a stand for the truth. We are a thorn in people's sides. We often hear comments which make us realize that there are multitudes of people who would like to live in a world where there were no Christians, and no churches. I am not talking about things that Christians will often do and make themselves offensive, but "we both labour and suffer reproach" just by living for the Lord and declaring the truth of the Word.

To "labour" means to work to the point of exhaustion. This is often true of the person who is exercising himself, or herself, unto godliness. "Suffer reproach" is not a particularly good translation of the Greek word. It is the word from which we get our English word agonize. It points to the struggle that a person goes through to win a race, or that one goes through in contend with an enemy.

The reason we do this is because our trust is in the living God, and we are seeking not only to please Him, but to serve Him. And so we have three major reasons for wanting to be godly:

- 1) Because this is what pleases God.
- 2) Because this is the only way to get the most out of this life, as well as the life hereafter.
- 3) Because godly people are the strongest witnesses to get people to

believe and be saved.

We preach the Gospel to all men, saying that "whosoever will may come." But we know that not all will believe, and so not all will be saved. But the Lord sufficiently and effectually saves those who believe. God is "the Saviour of all men," not that all will be saved, but the offer of salvation is to be made to all. And none who come will ever be turned away.

Then to Timothy Paul said,

4:11 "These things command and teach." How important it is for us to reject false teaching, and to turn the people to godliness. The servant of the Lord cannot be silent, but must faithfully discharge his calling to instruct people in "the words of the faith and of good doctrine," as Paul said back in verse 6. There must never be anything to replace the teaching of the Word of God.

And so we see that the ministry is not what we think it ought to be. The true servant of the Lord will not be seeking to introduce new things in order to attract people. He is to do the Lord's work in the Lord's way, and what that is we can clearly see in the Word of God. It is teaching God's Word, and looking to the Lord for His blessing as daily we bring ourselves, our work, and the people of the Lord to Him in prayer, looking to Him for His blessing. Without the Lord we will not see anything accomplished in a permanent way for the blessing of His people or for the glory of God. This is not popular today. Churches are doing some very ridiculous things. We need to heed the words of God through Jeremiah, the prophet, when he wrote:

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

However, may the Lord forbid that our response will not be like theirs:

"But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16). Also the Tabernacle was to be made exactly as God said: Ex. 25:9, 40.

We have a classic illustration in Scripture of a man who wanted to do something that was very new, even after he died, but the Lord refused to do it. Let me read the parable of the rich man and Lazarus which is found in Luke 16:19-31. (Read.)

To send somebody back from the dead to preach the Gospel would indeed be something new. But the Lord made it clear that if people will not hear the Word of God, they cannot and will not be reached in any other way.

Speaking of how men change from God's ways, remember how the Jews had made the house of prayer into a den of thieves. Cf. Matt. 21:12, 13.

Let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatian churches. The church of the twentieth century needs to hear them again and again today:

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faith not (Gal. 6:9).

The problem is not that God is failing to work. It is that we resort to our own methods to make things happen instead of remembering that it is God Who works in us if anything of eternal value is ever to be accomplished. Our impatience and our pride have led us astray. I love those words of Solomon which he wrote in Ecc. 3:14:

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 4:12-16

-February 28, 1995

Intro: The more you read 1 Timothy (and the same is true of 2 Timothy and Titus), the more you see that they are correctly called, The Pastoral Epistles. Paul was instructing his younger brethren in the work of the pastor. There probably is nothing that would benefit the church today more than for every pastor to be required to read and study these three epistles throughout his life. It seems like we have forgotten in this twentieth century that the work of the Lord is to be done in the Lord's way, not our way. Large crowds may be turning out in some places, but what are they getting? We hear constantly that it is getting harder and harder to find a church where the Word of God is being taught.

We are seeing another thing among pastors. There are growing instances of moral breakdowns. It would seem that one danger pastors face is that of seeking to care for the needs of others, and yet at the same time we are neglecting our own souls. We come to a passage here at the end of 1 Timothy 4 in which Paul was speaking to Timothy about Timothy. And every servant of the Lord who reads these verses (and I am thinking of verses 12 through 16) should take it as a personal message from the Holy Spirit to himself. Paul was concerned about the kind of a person Timothy was, and how he was conducting his own personal life. And this comes just before what Paul told Timothy about his ministry to various groups in the church. I have tried to indicate this in the outline which I gave you when we started 1 Timothy. Starting back in chapter 1, verse 18, Paul began to charge Timothy concerning his ministry. His message to Timothy became even more personal in 3:14--and from that point on. And then it became very personal, as I have indicated, in the last five verses of chapter 4. Every word in these verses was directed especially to Timothy. Let me read our text pointing out that emphasis. (Read 4:12-16 pointing out the thy's and thou's, etc.)

Gary has covered this section down through verse 13, but let me review what we have in verses 12 and 13 before we go on to verse 14.

4:12 There is always a tendency on the part of older people to look down on younger people. And that is even true for men in the ministry. It is true that maturity takes years, but young people do not need to feel that they have to wait until they get into their forties, or fifties, or sixties before the Lord will use them. And people in the church should not feel that way either. It is good for young men to recognize that they are young, and lacking in experience, but even young men can be great pastors if they know how to walk with the Lord, and maintain a humble behavior before their people. But the only way that young people can keep older people from despising them (a strong word, is for them to seek to be godly in their walk and in their talk. The word "despise" means lit. to think down upon someone. It might manifest itself in an attitude of not taking a younger pastor seriously. People might be inclined to think of his sermons as practicing, and sometimes you hear people say that that young man will be a great servant of the Lord, or a great preacher, when he gets a few years on him.

Now it is interesting that Paul did not address himself to the Ephesian church when he referred to this attitude, but he told Timothy that he was not to let people think lightly of his ministry. And it was not by telling them not to do it, but by silencing their criticisms by the godliness of his life. Timothy was to aim, not at being a great preacher or teacher, but at being a godly young man. We need to remember that when Spurgeon was only nineteen years old, he was already speaking to large crowds. The Lord doesn't give His people many Spurgeons, but Spurgeon was a great illustration that a young preacher does not have to wait until he is old before he can look for the blessing of God upon his life.

The key word for Timothy was "example." And the verb "be" which Paul used in connection with it meant not only that he was to become an example to his people, but that he was to keep on becoming a better example every day that he lived! No Christian is ever as

godly as he can be and needs to be. And if anyone is to be an example of this it is the pastor. When a pastor stops growing, his people are going to know it (if they have any spiritual discernment at all). So a pastor needs to keep his people reminded by his own behavior that the Lord's work in us is not going to be finished until we get to heaven.

The word for "example" which Paul used in the original text is the word type. A. T. Robertson, in his Word Pictures in the New Testament, cites four verses where Paul used this word type. Cf. 1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:9; Phil. 3:17; Titus 2:7.

A pastor is not supposed to be using himself as an example, nor should he be using his family as an illustration. If he is walking with the Lord he won't have to point that out; it will be evident in his life.

The word example in Greek suggests making a mark on something by striking a blow.

When I was in Junior High School in Tacoma we were required to take shop classes. We had electric shop, wood shop, mechanical drawing, and metal shop. Those classes have been of great benefit to me throughout my life. We learned simple things, like how to make an extension cord, but they were very practical.

In our metal shop we made things like metal bookends. And one thing that the teacher had us do was to take a punch and put our initials or our locker number on what we were making so that our work would not get mixed up with some other student. We hit the punch with a hammer to put the numbers or letters into the metal. That is the idea in the Biblical word "example," or type. We have the expression that so-and-so left his mark on some person. This is what Paul was exhorting Timothy to do. Timothy was to leave his mark on his people. He was to live in such a way that his people would want to follow the example of his life.

You can recognize what a Biblical example is when you think of the people who have left their mark on you. In fact, if you were asked what three people have made the greatest impression on you as a Christian. Who by his or her life has been the kind of a person, the kind of a Christian, you want to be? This is what Paul was telling Timothy that he needed to set as the goal of his life.

I can think of a lot of people who have left their mark on me. You see, it works both ways, not just from the pastor to his people, but often from the people to the pastor. But the pastor is to be an example in the hope that he will make examples of his people, and the influence goes on and on.

But examples in what? In public speaking? In the preparation of sermons? In the numbers he attracts? No. These things will follow under the blessing of the Lord if he takes care of the things that Paul mentioned in this verse:

- 1) "Word" -- This means how he talks, what he talks about, what his objective is in talking. Have you noticed how much the Lord has to say in His Word about our speech? I think that it can truly be said that the one thing we all do more than anything else is to talk. Talking is one of the first things that we do, and it is one of the last things that we do. In the book of Proverbs we are warned about talking too much, and admonished to make it count when we do talk. Cf. Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6.
- 2) "Conversation" -- This is our behavior, the way we live, the things we do, the places we go, the way we spend our time. This, like everything else about us, undergoes a complete change when we come to the Lord. Cf. Eph. 3:2. See also Eph. 4:22 ff.
- 3) "Charity" -- This is the familiar word, love. Be sure to notice that Paul was writing to Timothy about what he was to be with believers, and in his relationship with believers. All of us are to love God, and to love each other. The definition of love is given to us in 1 Cor. 13:4 ff. This includes traits which are connected with love such as kindness, compassion, mercy, goodness, etc.

- 4) "Spirit" -- This word is not in the better MSS, but it is in some, and so we need to consider what it means.

It is doubtful if the word here is used of the Holy Spirit. Rather it must have to do with Timothy's spirit -- his attitude, his disposition. Some extend it to include his objectives, his concerns. Matthew Henry thinks that it has to do with the need Timothy had to be spiritually minded, the genuineness of his interest in the things of the Lord. It is always disappointing to see a man who is one thing in the pulpit, and something less when he is out of the pulpit. Perhaps E.M. Bounds was expressing what "spirit" is when he said that "preaching is not the performance of an hour, but the outflow of a life."

- 5) "Faith" -- This means trusting God. Too often the Lord's work is characterized by politics and maneuvering on a human level, instead of in waiting upon God. If a pastor is really trusting in the Lord, prayer is going to occupy a major part in his life. Faith is going to be demonstrated where money is concerned. It is tragic to see how the church has followed the world in the way it goes after money. Paul wanted Timothy to be a man who really trusted the Lord in every area of his life. We all have our trials; a pastor has a unique opportunity to be an example to his people when he is facing his own trials.
- 6) "Purity" -- This word is used only twice in the NT, and both are in 1 Timothy. See 5:2. It speaks of moral purity. Matthew Henry used the word chastity to explain the meaning of this word. Timothy, as 5:2 indicates, was to be very careful in his relationship with the ladies in his congregation. He was to seek to be pure and without sin in thought as well as in act. Some say that this word even has reference to dress--that it should be simple, and not designed to attract attention.

The standards are high for the servant of the Lord because they also need to be high for the people of God. How important it is that we get our guidance from God, and not from the world. In all six of these areas Timothy was to trust God to enable him to leave a mark for godliness upon his people.

But this is not all.

4:13 Paul fully intended to join Timothy in Ephesus, but as far as we know he never got there. When Paul said, "Till I come," he did not mean that after he came Timothy could forget about these things. But he was emphasizing that these were things which Timothy needed to be careful about even when he did not have an older servant of the Lord with him. It is a real test of any Christian's character when you can see what he does when he is on his own.

Now the emphasis here is not primarily upon the ministry that Timothy would have to his people (although his ministry would benefit from what Paul said here). No, remember that Paul was writing to Timothy about Timothy.

"Give attendance to reading" -- Paul wanted Timothy to pay careful attention to the reading of the Word of God. In those days it meant to the public reading of the Word. People did not have their own Bibles, and so they had to depend upon the public reading of Scripture--although there must have been copies of the OT Scriptures which were more available to the people. But whether in the public reading of the Scriptures when the church was gathered together, or when reading the Word privately, Timothy was told to keep his mind working, to pay attention to what was being read, and to think about its application to his own heart and life.

In reading the Word of God in church a pastor can be more concerned about getting the message across to his people than he is about receiving the Word for himself. But Paul was telling Timothy to hear the reading of the Word for himself. A pastor in reading the Word needs to be absorbed in what he is reading; he needs to be drinking it in for himself.

It seems to be that the rest of the verse follows from the reading. In the Scriptures we have much by way of "exhortation," and must "doctrine" as well.

Now I don't believe that Paul was telling Timothy that he would need to pay attention to the reading of the Word just so he would have material for his ministry to his people. It obviously would have that benefit for him. But it seems more likely that here Paul was continuing to think about the ministry of the Word to Timothy. Timothy needed not only to know what the Lord wanted him to do, but to do it. And he needed to know not only what the Scriptures taught, but to believe it. Timothy's ministry would obviously follow this plan, but it is important for the Word of God to get into the preacher's heart if he expects to leave his mark upon his people. A true servant of the Lord cannot be like the scribes and Pharisees who said the right things, but who failed as far as their own lives were concerned.

We need both in the church--"exhortation" and "doctrine." And today there is a great need for both. So much of the exhortation that is given in churches has more to do with human psychology than it does with the Word of God.

4:14 Here we have a reference to Timothy's ordination. From 2 Tim. 1:6 it seems that Paul had a part in this. But "the presbytery" mentioned in the last of the verse a group of elders. This was the term that was used to designate the elders who were leading in any local church. As in 1:18 Paul mentioned again prophecies which evidently had been given in Timothy's case. There was no doubt in Paul's mind but that Timothy had been called by God and set apart for the ministry he was involved in. And yet this divine ordination was recognized by the elders who laid hands upon Timothy. And it seems that this laying on of hands was not just a formality, but that God used it to complete the setting apart of Timothy for the work of the ministry. It was important that the church, especially the elders, should concur that God had His hand upon Timothy for the work of the ministry.

For this ministry Timothy had been gifted by God, and the point in this verse is that he was not to neglect his gift. This meant that he was to develop the gift. He was to continue to grow and to learn and to apply the truth of God to his own heart.

There is no suggestion here that a man is qualified for the ministry just because he is a seminary graduate. Our qualification arises out of the call of God, and then continues as the servant of the Lord applies the Word to his own life day by day, always seeking above everything else to be pleasing to the Lord in his ways and in his work. But this verse indicates that it is possible to "neglect" our calling, to grow careless about ourselves, and so become useless in the work of the Lord. The danger facing men in the ministry was declared by Paul in 1 Cor. 9:24-27. (Read.)

4:15 "Meditate" is not the best translation for the verb which Paul used here. It rather is a call to be diligent, to do what the Apostle Paul has been saying. The NIV translates it, "Be diligent in these matters." Vine says in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Vol. III, p. 55) that "to practise is the prevalent sense of the word." So Paul was telling Timothy not to be just a hearer of the Word, but to be a doer! Pastors can fail to do just as much as anyone else, and might even be more prone to fail because of their familiarity with the Word of God. The NASB renders the first part of this verse, "Take pains with these things," suggesting that it is not going to be easy to do what Paul had told Timothy to do. But then we all have to remember that we really can't do anything without the Lord. The Christian life is a warfare, and it never is easy to be what the Lord wants us to be, and to do what the Lord wants us to do.

"Give thyself wholly to them" -- The NASB says, "Be absorbed in them." Nothing is to have greater priority in the life of a servant of God than being what the Lord wants him to be. If we are faithful in doing the Lord's work in His way, we won't have to tell

them what we are doing, they will be able to see it.

"Profiting" means progress. What a blessing it is to be people of God when they can see that their pastor is growing! All of this can be done, of course, through the grace of God.

4:16 It is easy to see that the Apostle Paul is saying the same thing over and over again. He wanted Timothy to get the point although it is very likely that they had discussed these things many times during the years that they had worked together. But it is so easy to forget the essentials when we are under the burden of the work!

"Take heed unto thyself." While Timothy was in Ephesus to minister to the saints there and to lead them in reaching others with the Gospel, yet his primary concern had to be for himself--not in a selfish way, but in order that he might be the most effective servant of the Lord that it was possible for him to be.

And for the second time he mentioned "doctrine." See v. 13. It is not uncommon to see a servant of the Lord waver on doctrine--either changing, or minimizing, or neglecting it altogether!

Paul's words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 are an excellent illustration of the very things that he wrote to Timothy at this time. (Read Acts 20:18-32.)

"Continue in them" -- a call to perseverance. There is no idea that Timothy was to change with changing times. Regardless of how the world may go, the ministry remains the same. And it is the height of folly for the Lord's servant to change what we are told to do in the Word just because we think we can be more effective in some other way. The latter part of this verse indicates that there must be no change, just improvement in what we have been doing.

We must say that Paul was using the word "save" here in a different way from what we normally think of when we speak of salvation. As far as Timothy was concerned, Paul had to mean that there was no other way that Timothy could save himself for the ministry, and continue to have the blessing of God upon him. In the same way, there was no other way that Timothy could continue to be a powerful factor in the spiritual growth of his people except by being what the Lord wanted him to be.

Concl: It would be hard to find a more significant passage for pastors, and for churches than what we have here. Churches today are in desperate need of the very teaching which Paul gave to Timothy here. In a day when the ministry of the church is needed in the world as never before, the church herself is sick and needy. We are playing games when we should be waging warfare. We are more interested in people having fun than we are that they would learn the truth of God. The Lord is not going to let His work fail, but it is very discouraging that there is such opposition to real teaching in the church when the Bible makes it very clear that that is our mission. Let us be faithful regardless of how things may go in other churches. We need to be looking for the blessing of God, not for the commendation of people who are in great need of help and guidance.

Notice Paul's parting words to Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:1-8. (Read.)



## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 5:1-20

March 6, 1995

Intro: It is apparent that throughout this epistle Paul was doing two main things:

- 1) He was instructing Timothy as to his own character and behavior as a servant of the Lord; in particular, as a pastor.
  - 2) He was describing what Timothy's ministry was as a pastor.
- To state it another way, he was telling Timothy what he needed to be, as a pastor, and then what he needed to do in his relationship with his people. And he deals with one for a time, then moves on to the other, and then comes back to the first.

Paul was greatly concerned about the false teachers who were bothering the believers in Ephesus, and he got into that subject immediately after giving his customary greetings to Timothy. See 1:3-10.

Then, after speaking about God's grace to himself in the latter part of chapter 1, he spoke in chapter 2 about the importance of prayer in the church, with special emphasis upon the fact that men should pray. He followed this up in the latter part of chapter 2 with some instructions which Timothy was to follow concerning the ladies in the church.

The first part of chapter 3 has to do with the leaders of the church--the elders and the deacons. The chapter is concluded with Paul's great statement about the mystery of godliness.

In chapter 4 he came back to the subject of false teaching, and exhorted Timothy not to let anyone look down on him because he was young (which evidently the false teachers were doing), but be an example for the believers to follow. With this emphasis upon his own life he was to see to it that he was growing in his understanding of the truth, and that he would be careful in living by the truth and teaching the truth. There is no question but that Timothy considered a true pastor to be one who was godly in his life and faithful to the Word of God. And in both of these areas he was to be constantly growing, making spiritual progress.

Now, as we come to chapter 5, Paul began to speak in more detail about men and women in the church. After a general statement in verses 1 and 2, Paul wrote about widows in 5:3-16. Then in verse 17 through 20 he told Timothy how the people should treat the elders. And the chapter ends with another of Paul's charges to Timothy.

So we can see that Paul's thoughts go from Timothy to the people, and then back to Timothy, and again to the people, throughout the book. And, as I have been saying, it is important for every pastor to know what Paul taught in this epistle so as to do the Lord's work the way the Lord intends for it to be done, but it is also important for the people of every church to know what Paul has written in this epistle so they will know what is right and what is wrong in the ministry of the church. Times change, and nations change, but the work of the Lord always remains the same. If pastors change and churches change with the shifting scenes in the world, then the Lord's work will suffer greatly, and the church will become ineffective in meeting the needs of the people in the church.

I have several sets of books in my library which contain sermons preached by some of the greatest preachers who have ever lived. Not any of them really expounded the Word verse by verse. And so this is a chapter which they all were inclined to neglect--with possibly one exception. But this

is just as much a part of the Word of God as any other chapter, and it contains instructions which are very important for the blessing of the people of God, and for their testimony in the world. So one of the advantages of verse by verse study of the books of the Bible is that it makes us look into passages which we would otherwise be inclined to pass over.

In Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary we have the following summary of the theme of the Pastoral Epistles:

Summary of Theme. The purpose of the pastoral epistles is to admonish, instruct, and direct the recipients in their pastoral duties. These letters deal with the care and the organization of the church, the flock of God. They contain common injunctions to guard the Christian faith, to appoint qualified officials, to conduct proper worship, and to maintain discipline both personally and in the churches. They give instructions in the work of the church and show how threats to the doctrinal and moral purity of Christians should be overcome.

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

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Now let us look at what Paul had to say in chapter 5. I can guarantee you that it is very important--as all of the Word of God is.

5:1 Here Timothy is told how to deal with people in the church--with older men and with young men, with older ladies and with young ladies. And so in verses 1 and 2 he includes every age group, both men and women.

Timothy, in his work with his people, was to manifest humility and godliness. Timothy was to be their shepherd and their example, but he was not their boss!

As I read this, I am reminded of the words the Lord gave to His disciples after they found out that James and John wanted the seats at the right hand and left hand of the Lord to be reserved for them when He set up His kingdom. If you are following our Bible reading schedule, you read these words just a few days ago in the Gospel of Mark. Cf. Mark 10:41-45.

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Remember the words, too, of the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 4:5:

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

The greatest example we have of what a pastor should be is our Lord Jesus Christ. Pastor means shepherd. We could very accurately translate Psalm 23:1, The Lord is my Pastor.

And so Timothy, being a young man, was not to "rebuke" older men, but to "intreat" them. What is the difference?

Paul was not speaking of church elders, but of older men in the church. To "rebuke" them is to beat upon them with words in the same way that a boxer would beat upon his opponent with his fists. This is the only time this word is used in the NT.

Words have great power--for good, or for evil. We are learning in our memory work a lot about the use and misuse of the tongue. Listen to what Solomon said in Prov. 25:15:

By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

And then in Prov. 15:1 we read this: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

It is important for all of us to learn to speak graciously.

What does it mean to "intreat"? This is the same word from which we get our title for the Holy Spirit, our Paraclete. It means to call someone to our side. It is the word for encouragement, or comfort. Timothy was not to back away from older men, but he was to approach them in the meekness and gentleness of the Lord Jesus Christ. This does not guarantee that the older man will listen and agree, but if he doesn't, the fault is not with the pastor, but with the hardness of heart which the older man has.

Younger men are to be treated as brothers.

5:2 Older ladies were to be treated as mothers, which the Bible says we are to honor, and younger women were to be treated as sisters. Note that Paul was emphasizing our family relationship--in the family of God! And so it is very Biblical for us to refer to the people in a church as a church family.

And to the younger women Paul added the words of caution: "with all purity." Robertson says, "No sort of behavior will so easily make or mar the young preacher as his conduct with young women" (IV, 583). This is the same word that Paul used in 4:12 (end), and, as I said when we were considering that verse, these are the only two times this particular word is used in the NT. Timothy was to be on his guard against sin in his relationships with younger women. Although Timothy never had any problems along this line, yet the Apostle Paul felt that a warning against such sin was necessary even for him.

From verse 3 down through verse 16 Paul discussed widows in the church. This evidently was a problem in the early church. We see this also in Acts 6. This is what led to the appointment of the original deacons in the church.

5:3 Widows are singled out for special honor. And Paul specified that he was speaking about those who were truly, in reality, widows--"widows indeed"--which probably means widows who had no children. This is not to say that the church could not and should not help older ladies who had never married, or, in some cases those who did have children, but there evidently was a special need for those who had been married, whose husbands had died, and who had no children. There were other qualifications which widows had to have including the godliness of the lives they had lived, as well as age. But we will come to that later.

To "honour" them meant to provide for them, to assist in meeting their needs.

Perhaps this is a good place to deal with the attitude that many people have in our day concerning the place that churches should have in meeting the needs of the poor and of the homeless. It is felt that church people should become highly involved in assisting anyone who comes to them for help. This is what has led to what has been called "a social gospel" in days past, churches actually taking this on as their main responsibility. While we were on our trip to Florida I visited a cousin I had not seen for over 50 years. He has a son-in-law who is preparing for the Methodist ministry, and is in seminary now. But he does not expect to go into the pastorate. Instead, he plans to be a social worker--which is what many pastors are anyway. They are concerned about people's physical needs, but don't know how to meet people's spiritual needs.

Anyway, churches are constantly being approached by strangers for help. And in these days when our government has taught people to depend upon others for their livelihood, there are thousands of people out in the world who make their living by calling churches and other organizations for help. I could tell you a lot of stories about how people try to "work" churches for assistance.

Illus: The man who came to CB asking for money to buy gas so he could get to The Dalles. The woman who called to ask for food at Thanksgiving. The man who called saying he had a sick wife, was stranded here in a cheap hotel, and needed money to get to California.

What should be our attitude?

Well, we need to be very, very careful about the way we give money or anything else to people. There are agencies in our city to help people who are genuinely in need of help. We may be assisting someone with a drinking problem, or a drug problem, by giving them money. As far as the Scriptures are concerned, it is clear from this passage that churches are responsible to help their own people. But we also know that churches in many places contributed to the needs of the Lord's people in other places, such as, for example, the way the churches helped the needy saints in Jerusalem. BUT IT IS NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP THE NEEDY OF THE WORLD WHENEVER THEY COME TO US FOR HELP. We tend to be very gullible and to believe people regardless of what they may tell us. The people we are to be concerned about are those who have been a part of our fellowship, and whose needs we know to be real. If it were true that everyone who asks for help needs help, and would be willing to listen to the Gospel, that might be different, but experience shows that helping people materially rarely results in their salvation.

But let us get back to our text.

5:4 If a widow has children and grandchildren (which seems to be the preferred translation of the word Paul used), they are to help their mother, or grandmother. But please note that Paul did not tell this widow to make sure that her children and grandchildren helped her; he addressed himself to the children and grandchildren!

It is like the husband and wife passages in the epistles of Paul. He did not tell the wife what the husband was supposed to do, nor the husband what the wife was supposed to do, but he wrote to wives about themselves,

and the same was the case with the husbands. So a mother or grandmother is not to demand that her children take care of her; she is to trust the Lord that they will realize that this is their responsibility instead of the church's responsibility. And Paul is speaking her of a Christian family. The widow is a Christian. Her children are Christians, and her grandchildren are Christians.

What, according to this verse, are children and grandchildren to realize when it comes to caring for a widowed mother or grandmother?

Two things:

- 1) That this is where piety begins.
- 2) That this is "good and acceptable before God."

"Piety" is godliness (which Paul has emphasized throughout this epistle. And "piety" needs to be shown at home first. If we don't see it there, what might appear to be piety elsewhere is not really worthy of the title. "First" means first in time and first in order of importance. This is, as Dr. McGee used to say, "where the rubber meets the road." Godliness needs to be put into practice at home first, and it is to be seen in the way we honor our parents, love them, protect them, and help to meet their needs whatever they may be.

"Requite" means to do for your mother as she has done for you.

We are to do this because God tells us to ("Honor thy father and thy mother"), but also because this "is good and acceptable before God." This simply means that it is pleasing to God! Some MSS do not have "good," but both words are used in 2:3. If there is one thing above all else that we need to be concerned about, it is that which pleases God. When we please Him, we have His blessing--and there is always joy that comes to us when we do what is pleasing to God.

5:5 This is a verse for every widow to pay attention to. There is no question but that the most difficult time in a person's life is when a spouse dies. But, according to this verse, it is not the end of life or of spiritual growth for the one who remains. A widow is "desolate," meaning she is alone; she is by herself. But she "trusteth in God" and "continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." It implies that she has been a woman of faith and prayer during her married life, and this is one thing that not only remains afterwards, but can actually be intensified.

Concerning night and day, Geoffrey Wilson quoted Fairbairn who said this:  
The expression 'night and day' is 'indicative of the when rather than the how long, not throughout night and day, but by night as well as by day-- a steady and regular habit of devotion (p. 72).

5:6 If, on the other hand, she is more concerned about her own pleasure, and wants to make her own happiness the goal of her single life, she "is dead while she liveth." This means that her spiritual life really doesn't amount to anything, and while she still should be cared for, yet that care should not include her pleasures, and certainly would bring far less blessing to her family caring for her.

5:7 The church needs to be instructed in what Paul was teaching Timothy, and to realize that these words are not just good suggestions, but expressive of the will of God.

The "they" here probably includes the widow and her family. They both have responsibilities, the family to provide, the widow to be godly. And when both sides are right in the sight of God, then the blessing of the Lord is sure to come.

5:8 To bring out why such care is "first" (v. 4), we see that a family's failure to provide for their mother is actually a denial of the faith, and is worse than you would expect from a family where Christ was not known. We can deny the faith by rejecting the great doctrines of Scripture, but we can be just as guilty of denying the faith when we fail to do what God has told us in His Word that we should do. What a tragedy it is when our lives bring reproach upon the Name of the Lord in Whom we profess to believe.

GOD'S PROVISION FOR WIDOWS IN OT TIMES - DEUT. 24:19-22.

March 13, 1995

5:9 There is an important verb in this verse which is only used here in the NT, and its translation is, "be taken into the number." One translation of the verb is, to enroll. It suggests that the Apostle Paul was not just speaking just of "a system of relief" (Gurney, p. 213), but "a more formal admission" (Op. cit., pp. 213, 214) into something which would go beyond mere relief. It seems to be the consensus of the several expositors which I have consulted that the Apostle Paul was speaking here of the ministry which widows had in the early church, ministering to the women in the congregation. And this seems to be the reason for the qualifications which begin to be listed here. This is added to what Paul had already said about the care of widows, first by their families, and assisted by the church as the need might require. But now we see that widows were not to think just of receiving from their families or from the church, but they were to consider giving of themselves by contributing in some way to the ministry of the church, in particular with women.

Paul began in this verse to mention the qualifications for such a ministry, which would naturally follow from the qualifications that he had given for elders and deacons in chapter 3. Let us notice what the qualifications were.

She was not to be enrolled for this ministry unless she were at least 60 years old. We will see why when we get down to verse 11.

She must also have been married just once.

5:10 The qualifications continue here.

She must have been "well reported of for good works." That is, even if she were 60 or over, she could not be a novice, or one who had not previously been concerned for others to such an extent that she was ministering to other people even when that was not her responsibility, as such. "Well reported of" is the translation of the Greek word, to witness. So this would mean that others would have recognized what she had done for others in the past, and would agree that she was qualified spiritually and by her experience to take on more of a formal ministry on behalf of the church.

She must also have been a mother. Some expositors feel that this might be expanded to include working with children which were not her own. And to have brought them up means to have brought them up well. She was responsible, by the grace of God, for contributing to the lives of children so that they were saved and presently walking with the Lord. So she had not

only been active, but fruitful.

She must have been one "given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; also Titus 1:8. And in 1 Pet. 4:9 we have this exhortation: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." Hospitality was very important in those days. To lodge "strangers" did not mean that they were to provide food and housing for anyone who came along. The "strangers" were believers that they had not met before. Abraham and Sarah are examples when they provided food for the three men who came their way, only to learn later that the three were the Lord and two angels. And so we have this exhortation in the book of Hebrews:

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Heb. 13:2).

She must also "have washed the saints' feet." This would show that she was humble, that she was thoughtful and concerned for the comfort of those who came her way. In this, too, she would have been like her Lord Who washed the disciples' feet. Cf. John 13:4.

Abigail was one who was an example in this. Cf. 1 Sam. 25:40, 41:

40 And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

41 And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

Mary of Bethany also would have to be considered here, although she "anointed" the Lord's feet, but the meaning was the same:

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment (John 12:3).

After this Paul said that this woman to be enrolled should have been know to relieve "the afflicted." This could cover a lot of things. An afflicted person is anyone who is in trouble. In those days it could have meant a persecuted person, since persecution of the people of God was very common. It could have meant helping someone who was sick, or who had been injured, as, for example, by thieves. The Good Samaritan was one who "relieved the afflicted." Cf. Luke 10:25-37. We are told that one of the first things that the Philippian jailor did after he was saved was that he "washed their stripes," the stripes which Paul and Silas had received before they were cast into prison.

And then apparently the Apostle felt that he had said enough for Timothy and the church leaders to know the kind of a lady he had in mind, he simply added, "If she have diligently followed every good work."

Such a woman would certainly be an illustration of what Paul told the believers in the Philippian church to do:

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others (Phil. 2:4).

You can see that when a woman had reached widowhood, she would not have the time to start to qualify for such a ministry in the church. It would have had to have been her practice throughout her married life. And so in her later years she could have the special joy of ministering to others as

a vital part of the local church.

Expositors are divided as to whether or not this was a special group, such as deaconesses might have been. But the important thing is to see that all of us need to be faithful day by day in serving the Lord. Our last years can be our most fruitful. Listen to what the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 92:

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

15 To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him (Psa. 92:12-15).

All of this does not mean that it is wrong for widows to marry. Although it does seem that the widows who served the Lord as Paul was suggesting here were to make some kind of a commitment to remain single. But as far as the widows were concerned, he was simply pointing out two things:

- 1) Christian families and Christian churches should not neglect their widows.
- 2) There is a wonderful opportunity for Christian widows who have served the Lord faithfully in their earlier years to have the privilege and blessing of continuing to serve Him in the later years of their lives.

5:11, 12 As we come to this verse we realize that not all widows are older ladies; unfortunately some married women are widowed in their earlier years. Paul said that they should not be included in the kind of a ministry he had been speaking about. And he told why.

The meaning of the latter part of verse 11 and verse 12 is brought out more clearly in both the NASB and the NIV. Let me read it to you in the NASB first:

1 Tim. 5:11-12:

11 But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married,

12 thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.

The NIV gives this translation:

11 As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry.

12 Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge (1 Tim. 5:11-12).

Verse 12 is what makes it appear that widows who entered into this ministry had to make some kind of a pledge or vow to remain unmarried. And it was a serious thing before God to make such a pledge. But the younger women were more likely to feel the need physically to be married, and so would back down on their commitment, and marry.

Now there is nothing wrong about widows of any age getting married, provided they marry in the Lord. But Paul knew that the younger widows were likely to want to get married again, and so he said that they should not be enrolled for this kind of a ministry. This would be consistent with what Solomon said about making vows:



4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay (Ecc. 5:4-5).

CF. DEUT.  
23:21-23

The making of vows to God is a very serious thing. And Paul did not want to put younger widows in a position where they would not be able to keep the vow that they had made to the Lord. He knew what a powerful desire both men and women have for married, and he did not want to be the cause of having some sin against the Lord because they were not able to do what they had told the Lord they would do.

You may remember Paul's advice regarding marriage itself. He never married, and felt that it would be better if people did not marry because they would be able to give themselves more completely to serving the Lord. But he also realized that some were not physically able to remain unmarried. And so he said:

But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn (1 Cor. 7:9).

God in His Word lets us know that He is very aware of our physical desires. He has given them to us; some have stronger desires than others do. Paul considered it a gift from God to be able to remain single. But in no way did he consider it second class or wrong to get married.

However, there was another thing that he had to say about young widows, and we have this in verse 13.

5:13 A further problem facing young widows was that they would have too much time on their hands, and going from house to house (presumably to minister to other women in need, would become "tattlers also and busybodies," not content to take care of their own affairs, but actually meddling in the lives of others. Their is a fine line between helping people, and becoming a busybody in their lives. The former is commendable, the latter is despicable. And so they talk about things that they should not, betraying the confidence of people.

One of the verses we have in our memory work for this week is Prov. 11:13:  
A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

It is not that every young widow would be like this, but the possibility was very strong that they would.

And so what conclusion did Paul arrive at for the young widows? Look at the next verse.

5:14 Paul said, speaking by the Holy Spirit, and with apostolic authority, the words which we find in this verse. (Read.)

This verse ought to encourage every young wife and mother. Being married and raising a family does not remove a woman from serving the Lord; it is among the highest orders of serving Him. Please notice that Paul felt that mothers ought to be at home, taking care of their children. To "guide the house" literally means to be the despot of the house. "Guide the house" is one word in the Greek. It does not mean that she is over her husband, but that she is responsible to manage the affairs of the home. She needs to follow the example of the older widows who have a special place of ministry because they have "brought up children" (v. 10).

But notice how verse 14 ends: "Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

Spiritually there are great safeguards for a wife and mother to have the position she has with its responsibilities. She will be spending her time profitably, and her responsibilities, very heavy at times, will keep her from things that would enable the Enemy to revile her for her failure to glorify the Lord. We see here, as in verse 8, that there is more than one way to deny the faith. The Devil will take advantage of every thing in our lives that he possibly can to bring reproach on the name of our Savior and Lord. He is "the adversary" that the Apostle was writing about in this verse. And so all of us have to be constantly on guard against anything in our lives where he could take advantage of us.

5:15 Paul was not only speaking by revelation from God, but he was also speaking from his own "sad experience" (Wilson, Geoffrey, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 76). Paul knew what he was talking about. One of the saddest things in the work of the Lord is to see someone, whether woman or man, young person or child, who has been walking with the Lord, turn and begin to do what the Devil wants them to do instead of what the Lord wants them to do. Paul spoke of him here as "Satan," our adversary.

This would not necessarily mean that the young widows Paul was speaking about were not saved, but it could mean that. At least their relationship with the Lord was in question.

It seems that we need to link the making of a promise to the Lord, breaking it, and then experiencing the consequences. How careful we should be about promising the Lord that we are going to do something, only to find out afterwards that we can't keep our promise.

5:16 As Paul concludes this section, he went back to what he had been saying about the care of widows. It is the primary responsibility of a Christian family to take care of their widows, or to see that they are cared for. In that way the church will be able to help those widows who are "widows indeed"--widows with no family to take care of them.

And so the Apostle Paul went back to verse 8. He obviously was very concerned that neither the church, nor anyone in the church, would deny the faith by failing to honor the Lord, by being disobedient to His will. Most of us are constantly on the lookout for false teaching (and this epistle certainly teaches us that we should be), but at the same time we can be very careless about practical matters in which also we are denying the faith through our failure, or even refusal, to do the will of God. We need to ask the Lord daily to search our hearts to make sure that we are not walking in some "wicked way." Cf. David's prayer at the end of Psalm 139:

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

March 20, 1995

The last four verses of this section have to do with elders.

5:17 The word "elder" in verse 1 of this chapter, refers to an older man. But "elder" in this verse, and the following two verses, speaks of

the men who were the spiritual leaders of the church.

When Paul listed their qualifications in chapter 3, he spoke of them as bishops, or \_\_\_\_\_ in the Greek. Here he called them elders, or \_\_\_\_\_ in the Greek. We probably need to think of the word elder as the title of these men who were leaders in the church, and indicating that they were not to be very young men, but men of some years with a high degree of spiritual maturity. Bishops, on the other hand, was descriptive of their work. They were overseers. This word suggests that they presided over the church, were responsible for the church, and were to be concerned about the spiritual lives of the people in the church.

Paul was speaking here for the information of the church, not for what elders might demand that their congregations do for them. The "double honour" spoken of here seems to be adequate support. This is in line with what Paul was speaking of in verse 18. Gurney suggests that "double" means adequate, that which is sufficient to meet their needs. But the "double honour" can also mean (1) the honor of having the position, and (2) the honor of doing the work well.

Paul was certainly indicating that "the word and doctrine" were to have the highest priority for the elders, as well as for the church. The Greek simply has "word and doctrine," not "the word and doctrine." So it would seem likely that Paul used these words to refer to the ministry of the elders, and the content of what they had to say. They were charged with the public ministry of the Scriptures, that is, a verbal expression of the truth, and their purpose was to be teaching--conveying to the people of God by means of preaching the truth of God's Word which they needed to know. If the elder did not give himself to such a ministry, then it would follow that he was not worthy of support.

The idea that an elder, or pastor, should be mainly an administrator, or an entertainer, or even a socializer, is not here. The purpose for the meeting of the church was to be the public teaching of the Word of God. And the support of the people was to be given if such were the ministry that was being carried on.

To support what he was saying, Paul gave two quotations: one, from the OT (Deut. 25:4), and the other apparently from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Himself: possibly Luke 10:7. Deuteronomy 25:4 says this: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." Luke 10:7 says this:

And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

We read a similar statement in Matt. 10:9, 10:

9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,  
10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

It is very interesting that at this early period in the history of the church, the words of the Lord Jesus were accepted with the same authority as the words of the OT. And we need to notice also that Paul supported his teaching with Scripture. Paul's use of our Lord's words are probably the first instance in the NT where the Lord's words were quoted as Scripture.

We have an example in Peter's writings that Paul's writings were already being accepted as Scripture even before the NT was completed. I am

referring to 2 Peter 3:15, 16:

15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

The word "scriptures," of course, refers to a written record, a written revelation.

5:19 Unfortunately sometimes elders fail, and their faults must not be overlooked any more than the faults of other members of the church. But a single disgruntled member could not bring an accusation against an elder. It had to be supported by at least two, or even better by three or more. This, too, like the Deuteronomy passage above, came from the OT, and even from the book of Deuteronomy:

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established (Deut. 19:15).

In 2 Corinthians 13:1 Paul referred to this OT passage because there were those who were bringing false charges against him. In that same nineteenth chapter of Deuteronomy we learn that the same penalty was to be exercised against one who made a false accusation as he would have wanted to see brought against the one he had charged with wrongdoing. Church discipline was exercised to keep the church as pure as possible, but it was to be exercised righteously, and not capriciously.

5:20 Paul probably stated this with reference to the elders, but the same would apply if there were sin in the life of any member of the church.

We need to remember that the object of church discipline was not excommunication, but restoration. And it was done that those who had not sinned, would not sin. It is one of the greatest mistakes our country is making today when our political leaders say that punishment is not a deterrent to sin. We wouldn't need nearly as many jails as we have, nor would we have the crime problem that we have, if criminals were given the kind of punishment that their crimes deserve.

The same is true in the church. The purity of the church, and its influence in the world, can only be maintained if the people in the church are holy people, dedicated to doing the Lord's will and to seeking always to please Him. The church today would have a far greater influence in the world if the teachings of the apostles had been followed.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 5:21-25

March 20, 1995

Intro: This chapter concludes with another charge to Timothy. This is the fifth of seven times that Paul used the word charge, or charged, but it is the first time that he used this particular word. It means that Paul was most solemnly and earnestly exhorted Timothy to do the things that he had just mentioned in his letter. He was not just suggesting that these might be good things to do, but as an apostle he was laying before Timothy the serious responsibilities that were his in the church as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. This epistle was to be a pastoral handbook for Timothy, and he was to follow very carefully what the Apostle Paul had written.

5:21 Paul's charge was given in the presence of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy angels. God is our Judge. He is the One Who will determine the value of our work. We know that we all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, but James makes it clear that those who teach the Word, or profess to teach the Word will be judged more severely than others. Listen to his words in James 3:1. I am reading from the NASB:

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.  
Some men today who are making the ministry what they think it ought to be, are going to face the wrath of God when they stand before Him. And to say, as many of them do, that the Lord would do what they are doing if He were here on earth today, will only add to their judgment. God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy angels are observers of our ministry, and are keenly interested in what is going on today. I am afraid there is very little of the fear of the Lord in our hearts, or we would be careful to search the Scriptures to make sure that we are doing the Lord's work in His way, not in some other way.

The burden of Paul's charge at this point is that His servants are not to be respecter of persons. The wisdom that is from above is "without partiality" (Jas. 3:17). If we are partial we are going to be too hard on some people, and too lenient on others. Bengel said in his commentary, "It must be Judgment not Prejudice." And Gurney added, "There must be neither fear nor favour" (p. 227).

5:22 Here where Paul spoke of not laying hands "suddenly" upon any man, he seems to have been speaking about laying hands of men to set them apart for the work of the ministry. When Paul wrote to Titus who was in Crete, he told him that he was to "ordain elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5). Great care was to be used in this. They were not to ordain men to be elders just because they like them, or because they were in places of influence. They needed to be sure that men were spiritually qualified. Otherwise, they could get into the work, sin by not doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way, and that would make Timothy a "partaker of other men's sins." Timothy was to keep himself pure, pure even in his choice of others who could be appointed to serve the Lord. Great damage has been done to the church today because we have ignored what Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus in these three pastoral epistles.

5:23 We learn from this verse that Timothy was not physically strong, and here Paul was exhorting Timothy to be careful about his health. The water in those days, and in many places even today, is not safe to drink. And so Paul was telling Timothy to use "a little wine" for his stomach problems, and his "often infirmities."

I think that it is important for us to see here that Paul apparently did not have the gift to heal in the later years of his ministry. At the end of his second epistle to Timothy he said that he had left Trophimus at Miletus "sick." We know that Paul himself had a thorn in the flesh--probably eye trouble. And so, coming back to Timothy, it was necessary for Timothy to use other measures to help with his health. And so Paul told him to "drink...a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." He was not encouraging the use of wine. He did not tell Timothy to drink a lot of wine. It was for his health, like we take our pills, that Paul was encouraging Timothy to take good care of the health that he had.

These are days when we have good drinking water. Here in the northwest we have as good as you can find in our country. So we don't need wine for our stomach's sake, or for any other reason. And the best thing that we can do is to stay away from it altogether.

Illus: Many of you have been greatly blessed by the Scofield Bible--and I have too. Not many people know that Dr. Scofield was a lawyer, and a successful one, but before he was saved he had a drinking problem that was ruining his legal practice. This actually led to his salvation. He was forty years when the Lord saved him. Afterwards he would not even drink a Coke because he didn't want to do anything that might bring back his old desire for alcohol. Instead of trying to see how close we can get to the borderline of sin, let's stay as far away from it as we can. Here, too, the Word of God gives us warnings. Let me read some to you.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise (Prov. 20:1).

Also we have these words in Prov. 23:29-35:

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

So let us not say that Paul was encouraging Timothy to drink wine, even in moderation. This was for health reasons, and he made it clear that he should take it only in small doses.

5:24 It is difficult to know exactly the problem that Paul was dealing with in this verse and in verse 25. Some feel that he was speaking about men who were being considered for the ministry; others feel that he was speaking of those who had been disciplined by the elders for their sins. It really makes little difference because the truth of these verses remains the same however they are to be applied.

Illus: I once heard the General Director of a large missionary organiza-

tion say that he once was asked what was the greatest mistake he had made as the Director of his mission. Without delaying to answer he said that he had made two major mistakes:

- 1) Overestimating some.
- 2) Underestimating others.

He had accepted some who looked promising, but who had failed in their work. He had turned others down whom he felt were not fitted for missionary work, only to find that they had had a wonderful ministry elsewhere--sometimes apparently with another mission.

This is what Paul was speaking about here. Pastors, the other elders, and deacons soon realize that they are not omniscient. We misjudge people. One of the greatest sorrows of the pastorate is to see someone fail, and often fail miserably, whom you felt really loved the Lord and showed great promise as a servant of the Lord. Or we have members of our families who have professed faith in Christ, only to go off to university to have their faith destroyed, and in some instances they never come back. I don't believe for a minute that the Lord was deceived by Judas Iscariot. The Lord knew he was a fake all along, but he fooled all of the other apostles because not one of them could identify the betrayer when the Lord said one of them would betray Him. Think of the pain that Paul experienced in his heart when he had to write to Timothy in his second epistle to him,

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica... (2 Tim. 4:9-10).

On the other hand you remember John Mark. He disappointed Paul and Barnabas by leaving them on their first missionary journey, and Paul refused to take him later when Barnabas wanted to give him another chance. This eventually led to a division between Paul and Barnabas. But the good news is that, again in Paul's last letter, his second epistle to Timothy, he told Timothy,

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry (2 Tim. 4:11).

Overestimating some; underestimating others. We have all done it, and we will probably do it again. It is not uncommon to ask a pastor what has been his greatest problem in the ministry, to have him answer, "The church staff." Undoubtedly we have been a disappointment to others, too.

Now let us look at the text.

"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment." Sometimes we are right. Thank God we are not always wrong. With some it is very apparent that they are headed straight for the judgment of God--and they never change!

But the latter part of this twenty-fourth verse gives us the other side. "Some men they follow after." That is, with other who look so promising and everyone is encouraged, but it is not until later that you see sins you never saw before, sins which "follow after."

The Lord Jesus had this sorrow, so He knows how devastated we are when it happens to us. I think of that passage in John 6 which tell us of how the Lord was teaching about His sovereignty in salvation, that no one could come to Him unless they were drawn by the Father, and that all that the Father had given to Him would come to Him. That has never been a popular doctrine among men. And so what does the Apostle John record as the

result of that time of ministry? Listen to John 6:66:

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Note: John was speaking of our Lord's disciples--at least they were people who had identified themselves with Him, and everyone thought they really had believed in the Lord. BUT THEY WENT AWAY, AND THEY DID NOT COME BACK! They were people who had been overestimated!

What does verse 25 say?

5:25 This is the other side of the coin, so to speak. And Timothy was one who looked good to Paul, and he proved to be even better than he appeared to be at the beginning. His "good works" were "manifest beforehand." What a blessing it is to find men like Timothy! Let me read to you again what Paul said about Timothy in his letter to the church at Philippi. You will find these words in Phil. 2:19-23:

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

In the case of others, they are diamonds in the rough. We might not be inclined to think much of them to begin with, but they "cannot be hid." Many times some of the most unpromising become faithful and true servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter was this way. He looked good, but he was always failing. He finally had to weep bitter tears before his life was really changed. He had to find out that he wasn't as great as he thought he was. He had to find out how much he needed the Lord, needed to trust Him. God was at work in his heart, and that finally could not be hidden!

So what was Timothy to do to avoid taking unqualified men, and passing up men whose hearts God had touched?

This is where he needed the Lord. He needed to be patient. He needed to be prayerful. He needed to remember that the Lord was in charge of His own work, and that the important thing was to do the Lord's work in the Lord's way, without partiality, looking for those qualities in people's lives which seem to give evidence of the work of God on their souls. Even then Timothy would probably make some mistakes. And we will, too. But our mistakes will be less if we carefully follow the Word of God.

A final illustration: You remember how Israel asked Samuel to make them a king. Samuel was grieved by this, but the Lord told him to give the people what they wanted. And Saul became their king. He was taller than anyone else, appeared to be very humble, and it looked like great days were ahead for the people of Israel. But then everything went sour, and the day came when Saul was told that he was finished. Then the Lord sent Samuel to the house of Jesse where he was to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the king of Israel. The first son came in, and Samuel said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him" (1 Sam. 16:6). But then it was that the Lord spoke to Samuel and said these very important words:



Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart (1 Sam 16:7).

The second son came in, but he was not the Lord's choice. Finally seven of Jesse's sons came before Samuel, but the Lord had not chosen any of them. And so Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons, and he did! He was out keeping the sheep, and was such an unlikely prospect that Jesse, his father, had not even called him in. He underestimated what God had done, and was going to do, in and through David. When David came in, the Lord said to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he" (1 Sam. 16:12).

God has not chosen us for what we are in ourselves, but for what we can become by His grace and according to His sovereign choice. Sometimes we can see the evidence of God's blessing; sometimes we cannot. Sometimes people look good to us, but the hand of God is not upon them. Let us learn how much we need God's wisdom to keep us from overestimating those whom He has not chosen, or from underestimating those who look unlikely to us, but who have the hand of God upon them.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 6:1-10

March 27, 1995

Intro: In this last chapter of 1 Timothy Paul continued to charge Timothy regarding certain groups in the church, charges which he began in chapter 5. He spoke of the responsibility of servants (bondslaves) to their masters (despots) in verses 1 and 2. Then in the latter part of the chapter he gave Timothy a charge concerning the rich (vv. 17-19). And so Paul was speaking to those at the two extremes of the social order: the slaves, and the rich.

We must consider this more than just advice. Advice can be accepted or rejected, but that was not the way Timothy was to treat what Paul was telling him. Paul was giving Timothy the will of God for those two groups, and Timothy would have been an unfaithful servant of the Lord if he had failed to do what Paul told him to do.

We need to remember this as far as our own relationship to the Lord and his Word is concerned. The God in His Word does not just suggest what might be good for us to do; we are commanded what we should do, and what we should not do. We are not to look upon the Word of God as something that we are going to pray about, like we would advice from a friend. We are to consider the Word as the ultimate authority for our lives, and any departure from the Word amounts to rebellion against God. And yet our obedience to the Lord is not to be like people who are forced to do what they don't want to do, but we must look to the Lord to work in our hearts "to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). The only happy life for a Christian is a life of obedience to the Word of God. But our motive must be to please the Lord. When we obey the Word because we love the Lord and want to please Him, then obedience to the Word will be our greatest joy. Think of what our Lord said about obedience in His message which we call the Upper Room Discourse. We are told in John 14:15 that the Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." I am also thinking of John 14:21:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

And then in the twenty-third verse of the same chapter He said practically the same thing. He was speaking to Judas, "not Iscariot," when He said this:

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (John 14:23).

God measures our love for Himself by our obedience to His Word, not a legalistic or reluctant obedience, but a willing and joyful obedience. What pleases the Lord also brings us joy, and the Lord indicated that this would be our reward when in John 15:11 He said this:

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

A disobedient Christian is not a happy Christian. We need to remember this in the work of the church, too. If we want God's blessing, then obedience to the Lord must have the greatest priority in our lives individually as well as in the work of the Lord.

But now let us see what the Apostle Paul had to say about servants.

6:1 Paul was writing about Christian bondservants. Some had masters who were not believers; others had masters who were. This is apparent

from verse 2. What was a bondservant?

In Nelson's Bible Dictionary we have this statement regarding bondservants:

A person bound in servitude to another human being as an instrument of labor; one who has lost his liberty and has no rights.

In Holman's Bible Dictionary we are told that one out of every five people was a slave in New Testament times, and in Rome they amounted to one-third of the population.

While Paul encouraged slaves to seek their freedom if it were possible, there was no attempt on the part of the apostles, or the early church, to abolish slavery. People became slaves in various ways. Debt made some people slaves. Children were often sold into slavery for families to obtain money. Of course a child born of slave parents became a slave too. Legally they had no rights, but were obligated to obey their masters. And if a slave were saved, he was still just as obligated to obey his master as before. They were to "count," or to think of their masters as "worthy of all honour."

The Greek word for a master is \_\_\_\_\_. He was one who had "absolute ownership" of "and uncontrolled power" over his slaves. Sometimes masters were kind and loving toward their slaves, but often they were hard and cruel. The Apostle Peter recognized this when he wrote,

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God (1 Pet. 2:18-20).

The Apostle Paul had this to say to slaves:

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God (1 Cor. 7:20-24).

This indicates, as Gurney wrote in his commentary, not that being free in Christ destroyed "the old, hard relationship of social services," but that "it hallows and transforms its spirit" (p. 232). The writings of the apostles did not indicate that Christian slaves should become restless and unhappy with their state, but that they should be better, more faithful, more diligent servants than ever before.

The people of the world have always demanded that no one deny them their rights. This is especially bad in our day, and it is easy for Christians to get caught up with the same spirit. We must remember that we are the Lord's bondservants, with actually no rights except to love the Lord, and to be faithful doing what is pleasing to Him.

Now why did a Christian slave have to be very careful about his life, his attitude, and the kind of work which he did? It was because what he was would determine how people felt about His God and about the truth which he claimed to believe. To blaspheme either God or His Word is to speak evil of it. It is to defame it. Whether we like it or not, all that we are and all that we do affects how people feel about God, His church, and His Word. For example, what kind of an idea of God are people given by those who protest at abortion clinics? I think we can say the same thing about people who get involved in politics. The Lord never did. Neither did the apostles. We need to read our Bibles carefully in view of what many churches and many Christians are doing today. In many instances you will not find any basis for their actions in the Word of God. If our lives are not a testimony, then we might as well not say anything to people. We learned in 1 Timothy 3:7 that an elder had to "have a good report of them which are without."

6:2 If a slave had a master who also was a believer, there might be the tendency for him to feel less obligated to his master just because they were both Christians. But this was wrong, too. To "despise" means to think less of them. The normal way for a slave to feel about his master was to give him the greatest respect, and to seek to please him in everything. That feeling should, if anything, be intensified in the life of a Christian slave. He should be a faithful servant just because his master is also a believer. "Partakers of the benefit" means that the masters are the ones who are going to profit from the good work of the servant. Therefore, this should cause the slaves to desire to be even better in their obedience to their masters.

We have in Paul's epistle to Philemon an interesting account of the relationship between a Christian master and a Christian servant. (Read and comment.)

Paul's word to Timothy was, "These things teach and exhort." This meant not only that Paul was to teach servants their responsibility to their masters, but he was to "exhort" them to do what he said. Look at Paul's exhortation to the servants in the Colossian church which we find in Colossians 3:22-25, followed by his word to masters in Colossians 4:1:

22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

#### CHAPTER 4

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

You can see from Paul's last words in 1 Timothy 6:2 that the leaders of the church need to teach the people in the church what their responsibilities are toward each other and to the people of the world. The church today is suffering from a lack of such teaching.

6:3 A person who teaches false practical doctrine is just as guilty of heresy as the person who denies the great truths of the faith. Evidently in Ephesus both kinds of false teaching were being done. When

it comes to living we are never to make a distinction between the secular and the spiritual. It is just as important for us to live by the Word of God when we are in the world and among unbelievers as it is when we are at church with the people of God. We can't be one thing at church, and something else at home, or something else in the world. If we are truly seeking to please the Lord, it will make no difference where we are; we are going to try to please the Lord wherever we are and whatever we are doing.

We do not have a master-slave society today, but the same truths apply to employers and employees. It ought to be a great benefit to any organization to have believers as a part of the organization in whatever capacity. Instead, our country is divided by racial differences, by men vs. women controversies, by class disputes. We can expect such things from people who don't know the Lord, but those of us who do know Him are to walk by a different drum beat. We are to get our directions from the Lord through His Word.

"Wholesome words" are words of true doctrine, words which have not been corrupted in any way. And the most wholesome words are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was not speaking just of what the Lord said while He was here on earth, but about what He was continuing to say through the writings of the apostles. "Wholesome words" are words, teaching, which produces "godliness"--which has been Paul's concern for the people of God from the very beginning of this epistle.

In English we all learned about conditional sentence, sentences which begin with the word if. Verses 3, 4, and 5 form a conditional sentence. A conditional sentence is one which says if certain conditions exist, there will be certain results, or you can be sure that certain conditions exist. The if part of the sentence is called the protasis; the resulting statement is called the apodosis. Verse 3 is the protasis of what Paul was saying. It is the part of the sentence which tells us that if you have this condition, a teacher who is not teaching what Paul was teaching, then you have the condition described in verses 4 and 5--the apodosis. So what can we say about such a teacher? He mentioned here ten things either about such a teacher himself, or what he produces in people--which, by the way is very different from godliness. Let us examine what Paul said in verses 4 and 5.

6:4 A man who does not teach what the Word says is "proud." He thinks he knows more than God does, more than the Lord Jesus does, more than the Holy Spirit does--the Member of the Godhead Who are infinite in wisdom! These are the people who tell you where the Bible is out-of-date, that we know so much more than they knew then. They are very condescending in saying that they did the best they could, but we now can go farther and deeper into the truth than they could. Or they are the teachers who will tell you that Paul was prejudiced by his Jewish upbringing. Or they will be doing things that have no justification in Scripture, but dare to say that if the Lord were here today He would be doing the outrageous things that they are doing. One major thing that is wrong with people like that is that they are puffed up with self-conceit, as Strong defined this word "proud." Pride will lead us farther and farther away from the Word of God, and farther and farther away from the Persons of the Godhead.

The second thing that Paul said about them is that they know nothing! Go back to 1 Timothy 1:7 and see what Paul said there about these "teachers." (Read.) Paul did not mean that they didn't know anything at all; he meant

that they didn't know anything about the truth of God. Just because a person is a professor in a university with a Ph. D. behind his name, does not mean that he is an authority about everything! He may be a genius in his field, but as stupid as can be about the things of God.

The third thing that Paul said is that they spend their time "doting about questions and strifes of words." Gurney explained these words this way:

The Character of the teaching is 'sickly.' It dotes and ails over idle disputes and verbal controversies--'word strifes,' Paul calls them (p. 237).

I have a cousin who is a few years younger than I am who, some time ago, sent me a paper he had written. He wanted me to read it and comment on it. I read it, and found it thoroughly confusing. He was trying to distinguish between the Word of God and the Gospel and some other terms, and, as I remember, he tried to say that some things were the Word of God which were not a part of Scripture. He was "doting about questions and strifes of words." He has been a missionary most of his life, and, for the most part has been evangelical in his faith, but he has really gotten off of the track in these later years. He feels, too, that drama is even more effective than preaching if we are trying to reach the world with the Gospel. He wanted me to dialogue with him over what he had said, but I wrote and told him that I wasn't interested. And the reason I am not interested is because I knew that he was not interested in what I had to say; he was interested in converting me with his new ideas. I don't have time for that. I pray for him, but we wouldn't get anywhere debating about what he thinks as compared with what I think.

You probably have had contact with people like this. I get mail right along from people who feel that they have gotten some new insight into the Word, or into certain words, but instead of dealing with "wholesome words," they are occupied with sick words--which this expression indicates that Paul had in mind. They are people who are not satisfied with the truth as it is; they want it to say more than it says, or something different from what it says. People who set dates for the coming of the Lord are like this. Their teaching is sick!

What does it produce?

"Envy" -- This is a word which is related in meaning to the Greek word for zeal, but, as Trench said about envy it has not desire to raise himself to the level of the person he envies, but just wants to pull the other down to his level. This is what I mean when I say that such teachers are not out to learn; they just want to make converts out of others.

"Strife" -- This means debate, argument, contention, quarreling, wrangling.

"Railings" -- In the Greek this is the word for blasphemy. You can't misinterpret the Word of God without being guilty of blasphemy. And you can't try to make the Word of God say what it doesn't say without blaspheming the God Who has given us His Word.

"Evil surmisings" -- These are hurtful suspicions. If new meanings are to be attached to the Word, or some subtractions and other additions are to be made to the Word, ultimately you are going to bring the whole Word of God into question. You won't know what to believe, and what not to believe. And you won't be sure that words mean what you thought they

mean, or are you to look for some new meaning. Anything that raises questions in our minds about our Bibles is the worst kind of evil. It undermines our faith, and causes us to doubt God.

The list continues in verse 5.

March 28, 1995

6:5 "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds" -- One writer has pointed out that this describes "diatribes of a prolonged nature." And then he continued with the following--that it was controversy in which neither side will give way, over that which is really not worth wasting words about at all (Gurney, T. A., The First Epistle to Timothy, p. 237).

And then he continued quoting Cannon Liddon:  
The new teaching at Ephesus...yielded intellectual amusement, but it had nothing to do with the Truth which came from Christ on the one hand, nor on the other had it any relation to the moral and spiritual improvement of its adherents (Ibid.).

The word "minds" includes the will. So it is not only a corrupted thought, but it produces corrupt action, corrupt behavior. This is always true about error, and it shows us that a person's life cannot be right as long as what he believes is not right. Only true doctrine can possibly lead to godliness of life, and it will inevitably lead to godliness.

"Destitute of the truth" -- Guy King said, "Not a grain of the truth of God is in him, he breathes the very air of falsehood" (p. 107). They are not only deprived of the knowledge of the truth, but they are kept from knowing the truth because their motives are altogether wrong (as we will see in the last descriptive phrase).

"Supposing that gain is godliness" -- Here is our modern heresy, Prosperity Theology. There truly is "nothing new under the sun." However, in this case it does not seem that the false teachers were say that "God wants you to be rich," or that "God wants you to be healthy"; the false teachers in Ephesus and Crete and other places, were out to enrich themselves.

In his letter to the Philippian church Paul described false teachers in these words:

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)(Phil. 3:18-19).

Judas Iscariot is an example. As Geoffrey Wilson said, "They care neither for God nor man, but simply don the mask of religion in order to enrich themselves" (p. 85). Cf. Paul's word to Titus in Titus 1:10, 11.

The same is true today. False teaching can be a very lucrative business. And there is a predominance of pride in it. As Paul told the Galatian churches about the false teachers of the Law,

They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them (Gal. 4:17).

How important it is for us in the work of the Lord today to seek people,

not that they might bolster our numbers and give us the opportunity to boast about what we are doing, but instead, that we might seek the Lord's blessing upon people, and thus bring glory to God, not to ourselves. As was seen in the case of the scribes and the Pharisees, false teachers will sometimes resort to the worst kind of treachery if they see that their hold on people is being threatened.

The verse ends with, "From such withdraw thyself." You will not find this in some of the more recent translations because it is not in the better MSS. But we do have such verses as Romans 16:17-18:

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

And we also have 2 Thess. 3:6:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

And then we have this word in 2 Tim. 3:5 where Paul was describing the last days to Timothy: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The Apostle John told "the elect lady and her children" when he was speaking of those who would come to her without "the doctrine of Christ,"

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 10, 11).

So I am always hesitant to say that a certain verse or statement in Scripture should be taken out. It may not have the best MSS authority, but it is in some. And besides, when you have other verses which say essentially the same thing, it seems best to me to leave it where it is. So let me say that when you have people come to you who are like those described by Paul here in 2 Timothy 6, the best advice is, "From such withdraw thyself." This is what I have had to do with my cousin, not permanently, I hope, but until he is ready to let the Word of God speak for itself instead of trying to force his own interpretation upon it.

But Paul continued with the theme of what true gain is.

6:6 He came back to his favorite theme: "godliness." The Lord sometimes blesses His people with financial and material gain, but such gain is never godliness in and of itself. In fact, if we are not careful, financial gain can be a hindrance to true godliness. It is godliness which we must seek first of all, and always. That is the greatest true gain that we can possibly have.

Cf. 1 Tim. 4:8. Cf. also Heb. 13:5:

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

While Paul was grateful for the gift which the Philippians had sent to him, yet he was able to give them a great testimony concerning the con-



tentment which he felt in his heart. Listen to what he wrote to the Philippian church:

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction (Phil. 4:10-14).

What is "contentment"?

Before I try to answer that question, let me recommend a book to you, written by one of the English Puritans, published first in 1648. It is called, The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment. It is an exposition of Philippians 4:11. Contentment is indeed a "rare jewel." I will confess that I have a lot to learn about contentment. It is so easy to be dissatisfied with the Lord's dealings in our lives. We want things to be different from what they are. But the Lord puts us in those circumstances that we might learn not only to be content, but that we might learn to be more godly. It has to be learned because it is not a part of human nature to be content. All of us have an inborn feeling that we want more than we have.

The dictionary is very good in defining contentment. It says that to be content is "having ones desires limited to that which one has." It is to be "satisfied." It is to be brought to the point in life "where one is not disquieted or disturbed by desire, even though not every wish is granted" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, p. 219).

But be sure to notice from our text that it is "godliness with contentment" that is "great gain." I think that Paul was telling Timothy that there can be no true and lasting contentment unless a person is godly. The world is constantly pushing us to see for more than we have, to want more, and to get whatever we want even though it may plunge us into debt. A Christian may seek advancement and improvement in his work, but he must be extremely careful that what he seeks is within the limits of the will of God, and sought primarily for God's glory, not for his or her own.

6:7 This is a self-evident truth. It needs no proof. Anyone who denies this is a fool, and you had better stay away from them.

Solomon recognized this truth long before the days of the Apostle Paul. Cf. Ecc. 5:15:

As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.

Notice what Job said in Job 1:21:

Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

One of the Psalmist said in Psa. 49:16-17:

- 16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;  
17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

Geoffrey Wilson quoted a man by the name of E. K. Simpson, whom I do not know, but this is what he said:

Whatever a man amasses by the way is in the nature of luggage, no part of his truest personality, but something he leaves behind at the toll-bar of death (quoted by Wilson, Geoffrey, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 86).

And so as an encouragement for us to be content, Paul added the words which we find in verse 8.

6:8 Recognizing the truth of verse 7, we will then, as Wilson said, be satisfied that our needs are met, and not always be hankering after the luxuries which we do not really need. Such hankering, or longing, will always keep us from experiencing true contentment.

Guy King, who always seems to have a unique way of expressing himself, had this to say about this verse:

Life's essentials are very few--the two just mentioned, and but one or two more: what we put on, our raiment; what we put in, our food; what we put up, a house to dwell in; and what we put by, for our loved ones (A Leader Led, p. 109).

But, if necessary we can do without the last two. If we have food and clothing, the Spirit of God through Paul said that we have sufficient reason to be content.

Agur was very wise when he made the following two requests of the Lord which are recorded for us in Prov. 30:7-9:

- 7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:  
8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:  
9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

There is an old proverb which Guy King mentioned in his book. It is that "much wants more." Most of us have far more than we need. Let us thank God for His blessings, but let us also be careful that our abundance does not make us crave for more, and so rob us of the joy of true contentment.

April 3, 1995

6:9 In this verse we have the discontented person--whether saved or unsaved, but in verse 10, speaking of those who "have erred from the faith, it is clear that Paul's emphasis is probably upon the people of God. And it is a solemn thing to think that that which is a snare to people in the world, can also be a trap for the believer.

"They that will be rich" -- This speaks of those whose intention it is to be rich, those who will to be rich. This is their purpose in life, to become as wealthy as they possibly can, and usually it means doing it as quick as possible. It is not a sin to be rich, but when riches become our main objective in life, then it is a sin, and it becomes also a trap into which we inevitably fall. And the falling indicates that the person Paul

was speaking about here becomes entrapped, or is overwhelmed by his desire to be rich. It can easily become an obsession to him so that he thinks of little else. Money quickly can become a person's god.

Notice the words "temptation" and "snare."

Gurney referred in his commentary to ancient secular, heathen writers who taught that to love money is to expose ourselves to terrible dangers (p. 240). A person will face temptations which lead him into sin. It seems like lately in the news there have been many who have been arrested and either are being tried, or are facing trials, because of the misuse of money. One president of a Christian college not only has used hundreds of thousands of dollars over many years for himself, but has spent \$400,000 on prostitutes. None of this comes on suddenly, but it is a passion that gradually controls more of a person's life, and it becomes a "snare" to him because he is unable to get himself out of it. And this shows the truthfulness of what Paul went on to say that people who go after money, not only lust after money, but "many foolish and hurtful lusts"--immorality, sometimes murder. Today many young people go to selling drugs because of the financial profit they can gain from it.

The end result: The person who is bent on becoming rich finds himself drowning "in destruction and perdition." This means that he is ruined--materially, often physically, and most of the time, spiritually.

Lot is an example of this. Instead of staying with Abraham, he moved his family in toward Sodom because he thought it would make him more prosperous than ever, and we all know the end of his story.

Achan fell into this trap. After the Israelites had been warned not to spare anything, or take anything from Jericho, he took a Babylonian garment, "two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight" (Josh. 7:21). The result: He and all of his family, all of his livestock, were stoned, and all of his possessions were burned in a huge fire.

Gehazi, Elisha's servant is another example. You will remember how he went after Naaman who had offered to reward Elisha for healing him from his leprosy, and Elisha had refused it. But the servant made up a story which he told to Naaman, and the result was that Naaman gave him two talents of silver, and two expensive garments. But Gehazi paid for it with his life because the Lord judged him with the leprosy which Naaman had had.

Solomon had this to say about riches:

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live (Prov. 15:27).

He also wrote:

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death (Prov. 21:6).

Add to these verses Prov. 28:20, 22:

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

The greatest of all tragedies is that a man intent on being rich has no time for, nor interest in, the Gospel. You will remember what our Lord

said about rich men and salvation:

And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Matt. 19:24).

In Matthew 19 we read of a rich young man who had come to the Lord asking what he could do that he might have eternal life. He said that he had kept all of the Law. The Lord let that stand even though it surely was not true. But then he told him to go sell all that he had, give the money to the poor, and then to come and follow the Lord. This is what Matthew tells us was the result:

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions (Matt. 19:22).

Judas is another example. For thirty pieces of silver he betrayed the Lord into the hands of His enemies. But here again the result was tragic. When Judas saw that the Lord was condemned, Matthew gives us this record in Matt. 27:3-5:

3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Peter made the demise even more graphic when he was speaking to the believers in the upper room where they had met after the ascension of the Lord. They were preparing to replace Judas. This is what he said speaking of Judas in Acts 1:17-18:

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

What a tragic end Judas had, and it was all over money. Even before that we know that he was a thief. Cf. John 12:6.

In James 5, 2 Peter 2, and Jude we have solemn warnings for the rich and their riches. Remember we are speaking about those who will to make this the object of their lives--to make money. There have been, and still are, many people who have riches who really love the Lord, and who seek to please the Lord by the way they use their money.

(Read Matt. 6:19-24.)

6:10 "The love of money" is the sin which would disqualify a man from serving as an elder. See 1 Tim. 3:3, "Not greedy of filthy lucre." The expression speaks of a person who not only seeks to multiply his money, but who hoards it, according to Archbishop Trench (pp. 95-97). It is this which leads to all kinds of sin. And you can see in this verse (6:10) that it is related to coveting. SAMUEL'S - 1 SAM. 8:1-3.

The illustrations which I have already given prove this statement. And we all have seen cases where "the love of money" has ruined lives, ruined marriages, and produced other disgraceful results. We have seen it in well-known TV preachers. We all are at risk. And we need to remember that you don't have to be rich in order to love money. Poor people often feel if they only had more money, they would be rich. But riches do not bring happiness. And if we set our hearts on being rich, we are heading

down a path which leads to greater and greater tragedies. How wonderful it would be if we really believed what the Word of God has to say on this point! "The love of money" is one of the surest ways for a person to self-destruct. Let us be thankful for what we have. If the Lord gives us more, let us thank Him and be careful to use what we have for His glory. But let us avoid the mistake of making the accumulation of money our goal in life.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 6:11-16

April 10, 1995

Intro: Once again we come to another charge which Paul gave to Timothy.

It shows how greatly concerned Paul was for Timothy and his place in the life of the church at Ephesus. It is humbling to any leader in the church to realize that it is generally true that as the leaders go, so goes the church. If the leaders are godly, there is a greater possibility that the people will be godly. If the leaders are obedient, the people will probably be obedient. If the leaders are devoted to the Lord, we can expect that their people will be devoted to the Lord. On the other hand, if the leaders fail, it will be a stumblingblock to the people.

There are, of course, exceptions, such as the children of Israel under Moses' leadership. And Judah in the days of Jeremiah. And so it behooves leaders to be continually searching their own hearts to make sure that they are walking with the Lord. This point cannot be emphasized too strongly. We need to remember that our Lord devoted Himself to the spiritual development of His apostles while He was engaged in His public ministry. It was important that they learn the truth, and that they walk in the truth. The work of the Lord was to be committed to them after the Lord returned to heaven.

This epistle to Timothy teaches us another important fact regarding leadership in the church. It is this: Present leaders need to be concerned about the future leadership of the church. Even during my lifetime there has been a great shift in the kind of training men are receiving for the work of the ministry. Consequently, the churches are headed in another direction. And we all should wonder where churches will be in the next generation if the present trend continues. Paul knew that he would soon be with the Lord, and that is what makes his epistles to Timothy and Titus so extremely important. They surely are appropriate for this twentieth century. The Lord may come soon, but we can't be sure of that. The early church was looking for Him, too. And so we have to continue on like the Lord would not come for many years. When He does come, even if it were tomorrow, faithful servants want to be doing what they are supposed to be doing when the Lord does come. In fact, faithfulness to the Lord is one of the greatest ways for us to be ready when the Lord does come. We have our Lord's words to this effect in Matthew 24:42-47:

- 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
- 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.
- 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.
- 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?
- 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.
- 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

Add to this Paul's words to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2:

- 1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
- 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

But now let us look at what Paul said to Timothy in verses 11 through 16.

6:11. With the word, "But thou, O man of God," Paul was calling Timothy's attention to the realization that what he was about to say had its primary application to Timothy himself. It certainly applies to all of the Lord's servants, even to all of the people of God, but Timothy was to know that what followed was especially for him!

What a blessing it would be if we all would personalize the Word of God in this way! We all need to read the Word of God for ourselves. We need to apply it to ourselves first of all. It is probably one of the chief failures of those who teach the Word that we think too much about what we are going to say to others, but fail to say those same things to ourselves first!

We had the same emphasis back in 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou..." And then notice 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself..." Here it is, "But thou, O man of God..." Let us be sure that we don't miss this simple but very important point that Paul was making. Years ago I heard someone say that we need to remember that when we point a finger at others, we have three pointed back at ourselves! If we all applied the Word to ourselves first, our words to others would reach their hearts with greater power and blessing.

Did you know that this expression, man of God, is only used twice in the NT, and both times in Paul's epistles to Timothy. The other place where you will find it is in 2 Timothy 3:17, "That the man of God may be..." We have the expression many times in the OT. It is first used of Moses in Deut. 33:1:

And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

We find that sometimes angels appearing to people in the OT were called men of God. Many unnamed prophets were spoken of in OT times as men of God. Elijah was called a man of God in 1 Kings 17:18. Elisha was called a man of God in 2 Kings 4:7, and in many other passages. This term was probably used of him more times than anyone else. David was called a man of God in 2 Chron. 8:14. This is repeated of him, too. SAMUEL - 1 SAM. 9:6-10

What does it mean, a "man of God"?

There seems to be general agreement among the expositors that I have consulted that it was not so much a title, as it was a characterization of a man to be called a man of God. Gurney said that "the title here was not associated with his office, but with his character" (p. 245). Guy King said that while it may have often been used as an official designation in the OT, yet in the NT it was definitely "a spiritual characterization" (p. 113).

And so it was a great tribute, a great honor, for Paul to call Timothy a man of God. It meant that Timothy had already shown that he belonged to God, that he was devoted to God, that he wanted to serve God and glorify God. It showed that he lived as a man with a mission. It meant that he had shown that he was committed to the Lord and that he would not be turned aside from doing what the Lord wanted him to do. In fact, if we had known Timothy we probably would have felt that he was already doing what Paul was exhorting him to do. Why, then, speak as Paul did to Timothy? Let me give you two answers to that question.

1) Because it is always possible for us to falter in the way, and to lose our zeal to do the will of God with a heart full of love for Him. How

many there have been who have started out well, but have faltered and failed along the way.

- 2) No one is so devoted to the Lord but what he can be more devoted. A faithful man needs to strive to be more faithful. One who loves the Lord should always be seeking to love Him more--and so on!

After addressing Timothy as a man of God, he told him to do four things. Be sure to notice what they were:

- 1) "Flee" (v. 11a).
- 2) "Follow" (v. 11b).
- 3) "Fight" (v. 12).
- 4) "Keep" (vv. 13, 14).

First, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things."

This means that Timothy was to run away as a man would who was seeking to escape from something. Paul was warning Timothy that he was in danger even though he was a man of God. Even the most godly are continually faced with dangers in this life because of the temptation which come to us from within--our flesh, from the world all around us, and from the Devil who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Cf. 1 Pet. 5:8, 9.

What "things" was Paul referring to?

Well, it is most reasonable to think that it had to do with the things he had just written about. He certainly meant "the love of money" and any form of covetousness. He was to flee from any temptation to be discontented with his circumstances in life. He was to flee from any tendency toward pride--the sin which was responsible for the downfall of the false teachers. He was to look upon all of these sins as enemies which would bring him down spiritually and keep him from fulfilling the ministry which he had received from the Lord.

The Apostle John would agree 100% with the Apostle Paul, and we know this from his words in 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world..."

In 2 Timothy 2:22 Paul told Timothy, "Flee youthful lusts."

Many of the proverbs of Solomon were warnings to his son of various people and things to stay away from. There are times in our lives when victory is ours through running away. One of the great purposes of the Word of God is to warn us of dangers which are too big for us, and which we must avoid like a person who is running for his life. We are to flee from sin in any and every form, and from the people who would drag us into sin. And it is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life that while we are serving the Lord we can be overcome and sometimes ruined by sin.

So, even though Timothy was a man of God, godly, devoted to the Lord, and diligent in serving the Lord, he was not so strong but what he could fall. David would never have been involved in sin with Bathsheba if he had remembered that there are times when we need to run. Many a servant of the Lord has fallen because he has continued on in a bad situation instead of running away as fast as he could go.

But the Christian life is not just a life of running away from things. It is true that the best defense is a strong offense. And so we come to Paul's second exhortation to Timothy: "Follow after..."



Just as we flee to get ourselves out of danger, so we are to follow after other things, to pursue them, lest they get away from us. Sometimes we are running away; at the same time we need to be running toward other things.

It is interesting that this word follow if most often translated in the NT as to persecute. In fact, Paul used this word three times in his testimony which he gave to the Philippian church in Philippians 3. He said in verse 6, speaking of his hatred for the people of God before he was saved, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church" (Phil. 3:6). He was tireless in his efforts to destroy the church. He was following after the church, not to become a part of it, but as its greatest enemy.

But then the great enemy of the church was saved, and he was completely transformed. And he started to pursue other things, as he went on to say in Phil. 3:12:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:  
but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

God had saved him to make him like the Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul pursued that goal with the same diligence that he had formerly sought to destroy the church.

And then he used this same word, follow after, in that grand statement of his goal in life which we all know and probably can repeat from memory: Phil. 3:14:

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The picture in this verse is of an athlete running in a race, putting forth every effort not only to reach a goal, but to reach it first.

Paul used this same word in 2 Timothy 2:22 to which I referred a moment ago. (Read.)

The writer of the book of Hebrews us this word in Heb. 12:14-15 where he wrote:

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Peter also used this word in 1 Pet. 3:10-12:

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

The writers of Scripture in using this verse were not speaking of some special project which would occupy our time for a brief period, but of a life-long pursuit of that which is pleasing to God.

What should we pursue, according to 1 Tim. 6:11? Six spiritual characteristics. It would seem that since Paul called Timothy a man of God that these were already qualities of Christian character which were to be seen in Timothy, but, as I have already mentioned, he was to be pursuing these

throughout his whole life and until he finally got to heaven.

The first is "righteousness." As a child of God Timothy, like every other believer, was clothed in the righteousness of God. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:21. This is our justification. So there was no need for Timothy to pursue the righteousness of justification because he already had it.

But there is another sense in which Timothy needed to be seeking, pursuing, righteousness. When you think of righteousness, think of measuring up to a standard. Let me express it this way. A righteous gallon of milk is the full amount which according to accepted measurements is what a gallon should be. A righteous pound of meat is a full 16 ounces. When Paul told Timothy to follow after righteousness he meant that he was to strive to make sure that his life measured up in every area to the standards of character and behavior which we find in the Word of God. Our Bibles describe for us what a Christian is, what he should be, and what he should do. Any deviation from that standard is a failure to be righteous. So when Paul said for Timothy to pursue righteousness, he meant that he should continue to bring his life into full conformity with the Word of God. The standards set by God are infinitely highest than the standards of the world. In fact, many people who aren't even Christians are alarmed today because they can see that standards of character and conduct which used to be taught and practiced, are being discarded. We as Christians must never let that happen in our lives. The Bible gives us our pattern, and we must follow it diligently, seeking by the grace of God to be and do as we are taught in the Word of God. The Bible is our standard, and a righteous person is one who seeks to live by the standard.

Cf. PROV. 11: 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13-20, 23, 28, 30, 31.

The second word is "godliness."

We ought to be well acquainted with this word by now because Paul has been referring to godliness all through this epistle. It is certainly related to what I have been saying about righteousness, and really gives the fruit of righteousness. Godliness is God-likeness. This is the definition which Guy King has given in his commentary, and it is a good definition. We have been saved to be made like our Lord Jesus Christ, and since Christ is God, and exactly like the Father, to be like God is to be like Christ.

Godliness is the result of sanctification, and sanctification is attained in a practical way in our lives by measuring up to what the Word of God says we should be and do and say and think. We have this stated for us in 2 Cor. 3:18. We look into the mirror of the Word to see what we need to be, and to see, by way of contrast, what we are, and how much ground we still need to cover. We must pursue godliness, and avoid everything which would keep us from being God-like.

The third word is "faith."

Faith is trusting God. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and so in order to follow after faith we must be constantly strengthening our faith through our reading and meditation on the Word of God. We are going to see in a moment when we get to verse 12 that we are to "fight the good fight of faith." But here we are to know, as Timothy was told, that we are to pursue faith. And we cannot do this sufficiently unless we are continually feeding our souls on the Word of God. There is something wrong with the time we spend together on Tuesday mornings if our faith is not being strengthened by our time in the Word.

It is safe to say that not a day goes by but what our faith is tested. Our faith is tried by unanswered prayer. It is tried when problems continue which we face in our lives--when it seems like they will never end. Our faith is tried in sickness, or even when we are weary and tired. The Apostle John said that the victory which overcomes the world is our faith. Cf. 1 John 5:4. When we face the Devil we are to take the shield of faith. Cf. Eph. 6:16. Faith comes when we think about our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Cf. Heb. 12:2.

We all need to be greatly concerned about ourselves when we find that we are doubting the Lord instead of trusting Him.

The fourth word is "love."

Paul did not qualify this word by saying that it referred to God, or to our fellow believers, or even to our enemies. So he must have been calling for love in every situation where love is expected of us. We love people when we seek their greatest good. We love God when we are seeking to do what He wants us to do so that we can be what He wants us to be. If we want to see what it means to pursue love, we need to read 1 Cor. 13:4-8a. Let me read it to you in the NIV:

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails.

One translation says that it never ends (RSV), that is, it never gives up.

If 1 Corinthians 13 is not descriptive of us, then we have some following after to do.

The fifth word is "patience."

We think of patience as being very passive, and there is much about patience that is passive, that is, waiting submissively when we are in some difficult situation. In fact, James makes it clear that the trial of our faith is what produces patience in us. But patience is also very active--not active in trying to get out of difficult circumstances, but active in persevering in whatever we have to do. We often use our trials as an excuse for quitting what we are doing, or at least for a temporary halt in our service to the Lord. But that is not patience. None of us can stop living just because things aren't the way we would like for them to be. Probably one of the best illustrations of a patient man in Scripture is Joseph, the son of Jacob in the book of Genesis. Wherever you see Joseph, he is patiently persevering, sometimes under the most difficult circumstances. In fact, things did not go favorably for him for thirteen years! And yet wherever he was, he patiently went on living, doing the best job that it was possible for him to do.

This word patience which Paul used lit. means to remain under. Patience does not come naturally to any of us. But one thing is certain: We will never be godly people until we start learning to be patient. And so we need to persevere, to endure, to be steadfast.

The sixth and last word which Paul told Timothy to follow after is the

word "meekness." Most of the translations use the word gentleness.

Archbishop Trench has a very interesting description of this word in his book, Synonyms of the New Testament, pp.152, 153. This is what he had to say:

The Scriptural meekness (Gk.) is not in a man's outward behaviour only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather is it an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God (Matt. xi. 29; Jam. i. 21). It is that temper of spirit in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; it is closely linked with humility (Gk.), and follows directly upon it (Ephes. iv. 2; Col. iii. 12; cf. Zeph. iii. 12); because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek; and which, as such, does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with Him.

This meekness, however, being first of all a meekness before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men, out of a sense that these, with the insults and injuries which they may inflict, are permitted and employed by Him [the Lord] for the chastening and purifying of his elect. This was the root of David's meekness (Gk.), when Shimei cursed and flung stones at him--the consideration, namely, that the Lord had bidden him (2 Sam. xvi. 11), that it was just for him to suffer these things, however unjustly the other might inflict them; and out of like convictions all true gentleness (Gk.) must spring. He that is meek indeed will know himself a sinner among sinners..and this knowledge of his own sin will teach him to endure meekly the provocations with which they may provoke him, and not to withdraw himself from the burdens which their sins may impose upon him (Gal. vi. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 25; Tit. iii. 2).

Our Lord's meekness was seen in His willingness to bear the sins of his people and the way in which he endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself (as says Trench).

What a commentary these six words are on what it means to live the life of a child of God! Coupled with the exhortation to flee certain other things, we see not only how the Lord wanted Timothy to live, but how He also wants us to live. May we take this exhortation as though our names were at the beginning of verse 11 instead of Timothy's, or better, along with his.

April 17, 1995

6:12 Thus far we have had in this particular exhortation to Timothy, two commands. The first one was to "flee"; the second was to "follow after"--both in verse 11. They complement each other. "Flee" tells us what we are to get away from; "follow after" tells us what we are to pursue. We are to get away from the things we are to flee, but we are not to let the things get away from us which we are to follow after.

Now we come to the third commandment: "Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on eternal life." This looks like two commandments, and they are, but they are related to each other. The first has to do with the present, and for as long as we live; the second has to do with the goal of our life and ministry here on earth.

"Fight" is from the Greek word which gives us our English word, agonize.

Strong say that it can have three different meanings:

- 1) To compete for a prize.
- 2) To contend with an adversary.
- 3) To endeavor to accomplish something.

It is the word which Paul used in 2 Tim. 4:7 where he wrote,

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

He used it twice in Colossians. The first was in Col. 1:29 where he expressed that he was "striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." He had been saying that it was his purpose to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. He used it a second time in his words of commendation for Epaphras in Col. 4:12:

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

John Monsell, who lived in the last century, expressed the thought of this command in the words of a hymn which he wrote:

Fight the good fight with all thy might;  
Christ is thy Strength, and Christ thy Right:  
Lay hold on life, and it shall be  
Thy joy and crown eternally.

We understand a little better what Paul was speaking about when we know that the Greek text says the faith, and not merely faith. "The faith" is a term which points to the doctrine of Scripture. Paul had expressed in this epistle more than once how false teachers had come in, and were preaching error. They were corrupting the truth, and especially as it had to do with salvation. Paul was telling Timothy here that he must strongly oppose any attempt on the part of any man to distort the truth of God.

Perhaps it will help us to remember how Jude began his epistle in verses 3 and 4 of his one-chapter epistle:

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the very beginning of time there have been continual attempts to pervert the Word of God. Satan was attacking the faith when he erroneously explained to Eve what God had said to her. He denied that she and Adam would die if they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

I have mentioned to you before that it seems inevitable that when someone is saved, some false teacher tries to draw them away from the doctrines of Scripture. Every generation of the Lord's people is engaged in a battle for the Bible. The Gospel today is being perverted in many churches which claim to be evangelical. We talk about man's free will when the Word says nothing about that. Man's will is in bondage to his sin nature. People don't want to hear about the doctrine of election. Instead they believe that every man holds his own destiny in his own hands. We hear teaching that Christ can be our Savior, but that He doesn't necessarily have to be

our Lord. There always have been many distortions of what the Bible teaches concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

To fight for the faith does not mean that we become belligerent and hateful in our behavior. It simply means that it is going to be a constant battle to preserve the purity of Christian doctrine and Christian practice--because the two go hand in hand.

If Timothy were going to "fight the good fight of the faith," it meant first that he must teach the Scriptures. He must teach the truth of the Word of God. It meant also that he must correct any teaching that was being done which was not according to Scripture. In his day, before the Scriptures were completed, it would have meant correcting any teaching which was not in line with what the apostles were teaching. As long as time goes on, the Word of God with its true doctrine will be under attack, and every Christian needs to be prepared to enter into the conflict.

However, having said all of that about doctrine, let us recognize that contending for the faith has to do with daily living as well. When doctrine is corrupted, so is practical living corrupted. Pure doctrine delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit produces godly living, but erroneous teaching never produces godly people nor godly living. This is the reason that servants of the Lord must be very careful to preserve true doctrine.

"Lay hold on eternal life." The words which follow, "whereunto thou art also called," point to the goal or the final attainment of eternal life which we will have when we are with the Lord. Paul was encouraging perseverance here. We press on "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). Some of these passages appear to express the idea that we have a part in saving ourselves. We know that is not the case. But neither do the Scriptures encourage a lazy, careless, almost indifferent attitude toward salvation. We run to obtain. We strive to enter in. That is, we seek by God's grace to lay hold of that for which He laid hold of us. It is our Lord's will that we not only have life, but have it abundantly. Cf. John 10:10. And so we give ourselves wholly to God, to do His will, and to seeking the fullness of His blessing day by day.

Timothy had evidently been doing just this. Paul was not only encouraging him to continue what he was doing, but to increase in faithfulness and in diligence, in zeal. Timothy was well on the road to glory; he was to be like an athlete in the games, not letting up in what he was doing, but putting forth even greater effort to win the race.

When Paul told Timothy that he had professed a good profession, he not only meant that he had been doing well spiritually, but that the profession he had made was in and of itself, good! "Profession" could be translated confession. It is good because it is of God, and holds promise of blessing not only in this life, but also in the life which is to come.

These three words, flee, follow, and fight are a summation of both the Christian life and the Christian ministry. And it is all aimed at our entrance into the fullness of eternal life when we are with the Lord. Whatever trials we encounter along the way, the goal is so far superior that they cannot be compared. This is confirmation of what Paul wrote to the Roman church in Romans 8:18,

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not

worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Now comes the charge to Timothy.

6:13 Timothy had witnessed a good confession "before many witnesses" who could bear testimony to his faithfulness and his godliness. At this point Paul charged Timothy in the presence of far greater witnesses than the "many." This is "in the sight of God...and before Christ Jesus." It would be impossible for Paul to show in any greater way the sacredness of the ministry to which Timothy had been called.

A charge amounts to a command.

We must not miss the emphasis Paul was making upon the sovereignty of God, not only in the call of Timothy, but in his ministry. In verse 12 Paul said that Timothy had been called unto eternal life. He had not come to God on his own, but he had been called to salvation by God. Here in verse 13 Paul reminded Timothy that it is the Lord Who "quickeneth all things." This means that He not only gives us life, but he preserves us in life. He not only saves us, but He keeps us. Labor in the Lord is not in vain. So Timothy was not to place his hope in his own efforts or ability, but in the power of a powerful, sovereign God.

The charge we actually have in verse 14; those who witness the charge are Paul, God, and Christ Jesus.

6:14 Paul was charging Timothy that he keep "this commandment." The Greek has the commandment. What did Paul have in mind? The singular form of commandment would seem to indicate that this would include all that had to do with Timothy's life and ministry. It had to do with his charge. He was to do things God's way, not man's way, not his own way.

To "keep" the commandment meant that he was to attend carefully to it, not to forget it, but to watch his behavior carefully so that there would be no violation of the solemn charge he had received from God.

I was listening to a group of reporters the other day discussing whether or not character was important in government. Only one of them really gave a firm yes as the answer. Read the book of Proverbs and you will soon see that character is extremely important for everyone! There is no question about it in the ministry.

He was to keep the charge "without spot." This would mean free from anything that would be displeasing to God. It was also to be "unrebukenable." Trench (p. 382) said that the word has to do with "affording nothing that an adversary could take hold of, on which he might ground a charge." One has to do with God; the second with men--although we might think of this as meaning that the Devil must not be given the opportunity of bringing a charge against Timothy before God.

Perhaps this is what Paul had in mind in what he said in Acts 24:16:  
And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

When Paul gave the qualifications for a bishop or elder in 1 Timothy 3, he wrote in verse 7,

Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without;

lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.  
Not only one who is giving his life to serve the Lord, but all of us as the people of God, must be careful that our lives are above reproach (1) before God, (2) before our fellow-believers, and also (3) before the people of the world.

April 18, 1995

"Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" -- This is a statement which shows the immutability of the Word of God. Paul and Timothy were both like we are today--they did not know if they would live to see the coming of the Lord. They hoped that they would, but they did not know. However, it is significant that Paul did not say here that Timothy was under this charge just as long as he lived (as we usually say in a wedding ceremony--"till death us do part), but it was "until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." So this means that the charge Paul gave to Timothy was to be in effect for all who serve the Lord, generation after generation, until the Lord returns.

Some people, even some Christian people, feel that there are certain things regarding the ministry, and also certain things regarding the Christian life, spoken of in the Word of God, which are not in effect for us today. We need to beware of such an idea. We live in a changing world, but our God is unchanging and His Word is unchanging and the needs of people remain unchanged. So this charge is unchanging as well. There is no lowering of the standards of life and ministry today from what they were in Paul's day.

"The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" -- The Greek word for "appearing" is ἐπιφάνεια. We get our English word epiphany from it. The Feast of Epiphany, a feast which has originated with man, is celebrated by some churches on January 6 each year to commemorate "the coming of the Magi as being the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, p. 336). The word itself means not only an appearance, but a manifestation of the character of the one who appears. In 2 Tim. 1:10 the same word is used of the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of our Lord was veiled when He came the first time, but it will not be veiled for us when He comes to take us to Himself, nor will it be veiled when He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords. People may despise our preaching today that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but those who do, and who die in their sins, will regret for all eternity that they did not listen to and believe the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul went on to speak of the epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 15.

6:15 When will the Lord appear in this sense, appearing to manifest Himself? Paul did not know. Timothy did not know. We do not know. It is "in his times."

Just before our Lord's ascension we have this record of what His disciples asked Him and what His response to them was:

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (Acts 1:6-7).



Note: "It is not for you to know." He did not say that it would not happen. In fact, His answer implied that it would happen, but the time was not for them to know. It is not only foolish, but it is sinful to set dates. The Lord has told us that He is coming, but He has not told us when He is coming. And He has not told us because He wants us to be in a constant state of readiness.

I had an aunt by marriage, Lucille's mother's sister. She was a perfect hostess. But if you went to see her, she wanted to know when you would arrive, and when you would be leaving. That was a lesson to me, and to this day, even when we visit our own children, we work out a time of arrival that will fit into their schedules, and we let them know when we are going to leave. That way they can make their plans accordingly.

But the Lord doesn't deal with us that way. He did not let His people know when He was coming the first time, and He did not tell us when He was coming the second time. He did not tell us when we would be caught up to meet Him in the air? What didn't He? Because He wants us to be ready all of the time! It is "in his times."

When that time comes, "he shall shew..." This means that He will exhibit, He will prove, He will demonstrate, "who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." Paul is probably speaking here of our Lord's return to reign on the earth. There may have been people who did not believe that He was the Lord when He came the first time, but there will be no question in anyone's mind when He comes the second time!

T. A. Gurney, whom I have quoted before, called this "the last great Epiphany of Jesus Christ." And then he added these words:

The spiritual intensity of the epistle increases as we draw near its close. Some have doubted if it be Paul's because of the different style of the Epistle from that of his earlier writings, its many new words, its lack of some great watchwords with which, in Paul's writings, we have become familiar. Such a passage as this should convince us. It is so absolutely his in fervid intensity of devotion. And when we set it side by side with other great doctrinal passages in the Pastoral epistles, we shall find that, together, they give us in its fulness all which Paul has already led us to regard as immensely, supremely important in relation to faith (e.g., 2 Tim. i:9-10; Tit. i. 1-3; ii. 11-14; iii 4-7). They affirm the undiminished, the undisputed, the everlasting supremacy and sympathy of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation as a way of faith in Him, beginning and ending alike with grace (Gurney, T. A., The First Epistle to Timothy, p. 261).

April 24, 1995

What does it mean that the Lord shall "shew"?

This means that He will publicly display positive proof, or evidence that something is true. This is the word which Philip used when he said to the Lord in John 14:8, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And the Lord used the same word in His response to Philip:

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen

the Father; and how sayest thou then, **Shew** us the Father? (John 14:9).

It is the word which all three of the Gospel writers used when they recorded the words of our Lord when He told the leper whom He had just cleansed,

And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, **shew** thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them (Matt. 8:4).

See also Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14. The Lord meant that the leper was to present himself to the priest as solid, indisputable proof that he who had been a leper, was healed!

Our Lord's brothers could not understand why the Lord did not give more external evidence, or proof, that He was the Person that He claimed to be.

And so they said this to Him:

His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready (John 7:3-6).

The word they used for "shew" was a different word, but the meaning is the same.

This also bothered at least one of the disciples when the Lord was speaking to them in the Upper Room. Listen to what Judas the brother of James said to the Lord after the Lord said in John 14:21,

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

**Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?**

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you (John 14:21-25).

After the Lord was raised from the dead, there is no record that He appeared to anyone who did not know Him. We have confirmation of this in the message which the Apostle Peter preached to the Gentiles who had assembled in the house of Cornelius. This is what Peter said; you will find these words recorded in Acts 10:36-43:

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

- 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;  
 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.  
 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.  
 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

All of these references which I have given to you show that it was not the Lord's will to manifest Himself, to show Himself, to everyone. Not everyone was given eyes to see; not everyone was given ears to hear. And the same is true today. Even here in our own country, comparatively speaking, there are only a few who really know who Jesus Christ is. Only a few know why He came and what He was doing when He died on the Cross. Only a few know where He is today, and that He is coming again, as Peter told the Gentiles, "to be Judge of quick and dead." And only a few know that "whosoever believeth in him," and only those who believe in Him, "shall receive remission of sins." How we need to thank God that He has given us eyes to see and ears to hear. And we can thank God that He is still opening the eyes and ears of some, those whom He chose for salvation before the foundation of the earth. But the great unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ awaits His second coming. Then He will show "who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." At that point in time there will be no question in anyone's mind as to the identification of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the major differences between the first coming of Christ as compared with His second coming. It is very important for us to understand this. He will show what believers in every generation have always known, that He is the absolute Sovereign over all of the universe.

We have had a glaring illustration of the spiritual blindness of the human heart during these days as we have watched the tragic results of the terrorist bombing in Oklahoma City. You would think that the Lord Jesus Christ didn't even exist. There has hardly been a recognition of the existence of God, but that has mainly been of Someone Whom we need to comfort us and get us through this dreadful time. But who has sounded the thought that God might be speaking to our country. Who has even suggested that we might be a nation under judgment. Last night I did hear a man on TV say that what we have witnessed in Oklahoma City is "only the beginning!" But He was not bringing God into the picture.

People aren't thinking about God in these days. Our leaders seem to have no idea that it might be because we have despised the God of heaven and earth with our sins, that He is withholding His protection over us, and is subjecting us to the evil doings of wicked men.

Among the proverbs of Solomon which the men of King Hezekiah copied out was this one found in Prov. 26:2:

As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

The NKJ renders it this way:

Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.

The NIV translates it like this:

Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.

There is a cause for what has happened. Could it be our sins, the sins of our nation, the sins of all of the people of America? We need to go back and read again what the Lord said about two disasters which took place during His time on earth. The record is in the first five verses of Luke 13:

- 1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.
- 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?
- 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.
- 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?
- 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

It is clearly one of the ways of God to bring judgment on a few to warn whole nations. When the children of Israel entered the promised land, one man sinned when Jericho was taken. When the children of Israel went up against Ai they thought it would be easy to conquer that city, but they were defeated and thirty-six men who had nothing to do with Achan's sin, died!

Can any of us possibly think that God is going to close His eyes to our sin? They have literally reached unto heaven. We legalize sins which are an abomination to the Lord--specifically, homosexuality and abortion. Adultery has become a way of life with millions of Americans, and our homes are being destroyed as a result. We don't punish our criminals when that is the God-given responsibility of governments. Dishonesty prevails in government, in business, and in people's lives individually. And the light which we as a nation have had is fast becoming total darkness. And while all of this is going on in the world, churches are playing games. It is harder and harder to find Bible-teaching churches, and we find many of the sins of the world are making their way into the church. And yet our hearts tell us, even the worst of us, that there is a God. And creation itself bears testimony to a mighty, very wise God. But people are not concerned about God these days. We do what we know is wrong (or we wouldn't try to hide it), and yet think that we are going to get away with it. You and I who know the Lord and love Him ought to be asking the Lord to search our hearts to make sure that we are not displeasing Him, and then pray daily that the Lord might be pleased in grace to visit our country once again with a true spiritual awakening. There is no other way that our country can possibly escape greater and greater judgments from God.

But there is coming a great day, too late for many people, but then, as the Apostle Paul said here, He will show "who is the blessed and only Potentate." God is called "blessed" in 1 Tim. 1:11. Our hope is called "blessed" in Titus 2:13 where Paul spoke of the glorious epiphany of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. And here the Lord Jesus Christ is called "blessed."

When the Lord came the first time, He was called "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). When He comes again the Apostle Paul says that He will be "blessed," which is the familiar Greek word for happy! Matthew Poole wrote in his commentary many years ago that our Lord

is called "blessed" because "He is the fountain of all felicity and happiness" (III, p. 789). And Adam Clarke pointed out that "blessed and only Potentate" is not a title that could be applied to any human ruler. It belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ alone. All kings and all lords will one day recognize that they are subject to Him Who has all authority in heaven and in earth.

We should not think it strange to refer to our Lord as being "blessed," happy. Remember what we have in Jude 24, 25:

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Notice the words, "with exceeding joy." Whose joy is this? Is it ours? YES! But it will also be the Lord's.

One of our hymn writers has caught this idea and expressed it in a stanza of a hymn in these words, speaking of the time when we are with the Lord:

He and I in that bright glory, one deep joy shall share:  
mine, to be forever with Him; His, that I am there.

But not only will that time bring great joy to Christ, and great joy to God, but it will show that our Lord is "the only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The word Potentate is used only three times in the NT: here, in Luke 1:52, and Acts 8:27. It speaks of one who has great power and authority. The context determines how great a person's authority is. Here we can see that our Lord's authority will be supreme. When He comes, every knee shall bow before Him, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, and among those bowing will be every King, every Lord, every President, every Dictator. When He sets up His kingdom, every authority on earth will be subject to Him. Men will recognize then that He is "the only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." I am sure you will agree with me when I say, "That day cannot come too soon!"

6:16 Here is one of the greatest statements in Scripture declaring the absolute Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And here the Apostle Paul portrayed for us the unique and eternal glory of our Savior.

Not only is He the only Potentate, with no one having greater power than He does, but He is the only One Who has "immortality." Lit. we could translate this phrase, "Who only hath athanasia." He is deathless. This is a part of His Deity. It is the essence of His being. He is without beginning and without ending. He tasted death for us, but now "death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. 6:9). His humanity has not changed His deathlessness. Because He lives, we live. And because He lives eternally, we, too, shall live eternally.

When our Lord was here on earth men could look at Him, and be in His presence, and listen to His teaching because His glory was veiled. But our Lord in His glory dwells in a light which we cannot approach. There has been a difference among expositors as to whether or not Paul was speaking here of God, or of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we can surely declare the same truth about the glory of Christ that we can about the glory of God. Even when the Lord was seen in His glory on earth, it had to have been less than His full glory. In our humanity we are not capable

to gazing upon such glory. The glory of the Son is identical with the glory. And what no one else on earth can possibly do, you and I included, we will enjoy continually in the Father's presence, seeing our Lord face to face.

And so, what other conclusion can we reach, but what Paul said at the end of verse 16: "To whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." The "amen" closes the doxology as it did in 1:17. May this same doxology be in our hearts now so that we will be ready to ascribe all honor and power to Him in that day when we shall see Him face to face.

Concl: Before we leave this passage, let us remember that the doxology is the conclusion of the charge which Paul gave to Timothy. Timothy was to live and work with the hope of seeing the Lord continually in his heart. And, not knowing when the Lord would come, he was to be ready every day for that glorious event.

Both Paul and Timothy now are with the Lord, and they understand what was written here far better than they could ever have understood them when Paul wrote them or when Timothy first read them. The glory of our blessed Lord really cannot be fully conveyed to us in words. But some day we, too, will be able to see what we cannot see now, the unveiled glory of our Savior and of our God. What a day that will be! And to think that we will share in that glory with the Triune God for all eternity. Surely our hearts should be full of praise as Paul's was when he wrote these words.

There are two great doxologies in this epistle. The first one is in chapter 1, verse 17; the second is here. What called forth such worship and adoration from the heart of the Apostle as he wrote to Timothy? It seems that there were two reasons which all of us can share with the Apostle Paul:

- 1) In chapter 1 Paul seemed overwhelmed with gratitude to God when he considered again the mercy and grace of God in his own salvation. When we consider the glory of God and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can all be amazed that They would ever have anything to do with us. And so we worship Him.
- 2) In chapter 6 Paul had been speaking about the Christian life and the Christian ministry, which all of us have a part in in one way or another. And here again Paul marveled at the goodness of God in making such a life possible for us, as well as such a ministry.

If the same feelings of worship fill our hearts as we read this epistle, then we know that we have entered into, at least in some measure, the truth which the Apostle Paul was seeking to convey to Timothy.

## STUDIES IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1 Timothy 6:17-21

April 24, 1995

Intro: It would be interesting to know what the situation was in Ephesus as far as riches were concerned. Just before his charge to Timothy in this chapter, Paul had addressed those whose purpose in life seems to have been to become rich. (Note in verse 9, "they that will be rich," or who will to be rich, who were not rich but wanted to be.) Now, as we come to verse 17 of chapter 6 Paul told Timothy what his ministry to rich people should be.

In reading through the epistles of Paul we need to notice how he addressed himself to various groups in the church--men, women, husbands, wives, young people, children, widows, masters, servants, rich, poor, and so on. There is much truth that applies equally to all of us, but there are needs which seem to be characteristic of certain age groups, or certain groups in society. And these instructions are timeless; they are just as valuable for us today as they were to the people of God in Paul's day. And we can assume, I believe, that Paul did not want Timothy to wait for problems to develop, but that these specific instructions and warning should be a regular part of his ministry to the people of Ephesus (and anywhere else he might be ministering).

But notice that Paul did not do what we find taking place in our country today: he did not set one group against another. If we take all that he said to the various groups in the church, we can see that it would promote fellowship and lead the people of God to even greater blessings than they had been experiencing. Paul gave the instruction. Timothy was to pass it on. Then the people were responsible to God as to how they used what they had been told.

In the next three verses Paul spoke to Timothy about how to minister to rich believers. It is very clear in Scripture that to have our hearts set on getting as much money as we can, is one of the greatest dangers that any person can make. The Bible has much to say about riches. Our Lord Jesus spoke of it on several occasions. One was the case when a rich ruler came to Him asking what he could do to inherit eternal life. Let me read that well-known story to you. It appears in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I have chosen to read it to you in Mark's Gospel because it has a detail now contained in the other Gospels: Mark 10:17-27. (Read.)

So we don't see a great many rich people on their way to heaven. There are many who go to church, but usually they go where there is a lot of ceremony, but little or no Bible teaching. We see that this, too, is according to God's plan. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-29:

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Solomon spoke in the book of Ecclesiastes about his search for happiness through wealth. Let me read that to you: Ecc. 2:1-11. (Read.)

Jeremiah spoke to the rich and others in these words found in Jer. 9:23-24:

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

And yet this is the American dream. We are continually bombarded with the idea that to be happy we have to have things--a job with a huge salary, the latest model car, a new home, perhaps a boat, money to enjoy all of the pleasures we want to have. Look at the commercials on TV. They all are trying to get our money, and if you want what they are offering, you have to have money. Lotteries which a few years were illegal, are taking in millions from people who think that if they win, and don't have to work anymore, that they will be happy. And people get all excited on game shows where they think that they will be happier if they can only win a lot of money.

There is nothing wrong with possessions as long as that is not our goal in life. But we are being deceived if we think that money can purchase happiness. However, we see that Paul said in verse 17 which we are coming to that it is God "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." So the Lord gives most of us more than we actually need, and he intends that we should find some pleasure in what He gives us. But it is different when the acquiring of money becomes our goal in life. Paul has warned us in this chapter that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. But even Christians have a hard time believing that. But if we only look at our society we see that the acquiring of money today is often connected with divorce, with murder, with drugs, with men who are traitors to their country, with all kinds of immorality, with embezzlement, with other betrayals of trust in government and in business. The Word of God is absolutely true when we are told, as we are in this chapter, that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).

I want to take the time to read you a rather lengthy quotation I found in one of my commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles, written by Alfred Plummer. It is a most unusual statement of what happens to a man when he makes the attaining of riches his goal in life. It had to be a present difficulty in Ephesus, or the Apostle would not have said so much about it. Listen as I read this section: Plummer, Alfred, The Pastoral Epistles, The Expositor's Bible, pp. 193c-198, dated 1889. He taught at the University College in Durham, England, and also at Trinity College, Oxford University. (Read.)

With all of these dangers in mind, let us turn to our text,

6:17 "Charge" is the same word that Paul used in 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13. It does not speak merely of a suggestion, but of a command (and it is so translated throughout the NT in most of the places where it is used). This was a message from God through Paul to Timothy.

"Rich in this world" -- The Lord once told a story about a rich man who was "rich in this world." It is found in Luke 12, beginning with verse 13:

13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over



you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:13-21).

Our Lord did not say that it is impossible for a man who is rich in this world to be rich also toward God, but it certainly must true that a person who is both is very rare.

We also have these words from our Lord:

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

As I have said before, Paul was not saying that it is a sin to be rich, but he was saying that rich people need to be aware of the dangers that accompany wealth. We should recognize, too, that people who are not particularly wealthy, but have their hearts set on getting more money, and faced with the same dangers.

The first danger that Paul mentioned was what he called, highmindedness. This describes one who has an exalted opinion of himself. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote Rom. 12:3:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

And then Paul indicated in the following verses that highmindedness can cause trouble in the church where much depends on unity of spirit. And then farther down in the chapter he told the Roman believers that anyone who gives should do it "with simplicity." This means that he should not do it with any great display, nor was he to think of what he might get in return for his gift.

Pride is a constant problem which we all face. A rich man can be proud of his work in attaining his riches. Or he can be proud of his willingness to give, and the fact that he gives more than others do. He can be proud that he has so much left over when he has made his gift. Instead, he should be praising God Who has given him the ability that he has, that he has had the blessing of God in accumulating what he has, and that the Lord has made him willing to give. We are not to do anything that we do for our own glory, but for the glory of God. A highminded man will either

want to have all of the glory, or at least share the glory with God.

In Romans 12:16 Paul added this: "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits." This latter statement simply means, Don't be conceited. This is a good word for all of us. A proud heart keeps us from many blessings that a humble man enjoys, but it also opens the door for all kinds of sins and difficulties in our lives. The Lord Jesus Christ is our greatest example of humility as we learn in Phil. 2:5-8 and Matt. 11:28-30 ("Come unto me...").

We often say that a person is worth so much money, but material possessions add nothing to us in our relationship with God. In fact, they can easily be the opposite, keeping us from seeing how much we need the Lord.

The second thing about which Paul warned the rich was trusting in uncertain riches. This is what Solomon said in this connection:

Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven (Prov. 23:5).

Thus the Scriptures tell us that we can lose whatever money we have. Earlier in this chapter Paul reminded Timothy that we didn't bring anything into this world, and we can't take anything with us. And the Bible also tells us that we don't know what is going to happen to our money after we are gone. Cf. Psalms 39:6,

Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

Contrast the two expressions, "uncertain riches" and "the living God." If our trust is in our money we are trusting that which can be here today, and gone tomorrow. But even if it continues and increases, it can never purchase our way to heaven. So we must be thankful for what we have, but realize that all that we have is what God has provided for us. He is here today, and He also will be here tomorrow, unchanging, more than sufficient for every need that we have.

On "the living God," cf. 1 Tim. 3:15 and 4:10. Some MSS do not have the word, "living," but some do.

"Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Adam Clarke made this comment:

Who not only has all good, but dispenses it liberally for the supply of the wants of all his creatures; and he does not give merely what is necessary, but he gives what tends to render life comfortable. The comforts of life come from God, as well as the necessaries. He not only gives us a bare subsistence, but he gives us enjoyments (VI, p. 618).

We are to enjoy what God gives, and render our praise to Him, but we are not to set our hearts on anything material. It is easy to concentrate on the gifts, but to forget the Giver.

May 1, 1995

6:18 Verse 17 contained the first two commandments in the charge for the rich--and they are mainly negative:

- 1) Don't be highminded.
- 2) Don't trust in uncertain riches. A positive note does follow this

when he went on to say that the rich were to trust "in the living God."

But the next two verses which have to do with the rich are mainly positive. Here they are:

- 3) Do good.
- 4) Be rich in good works.
- 5) Be ready to give, willing to communicate.
- 6) Lay hold on eternal life. See v. 12.

We have already considered the first two; now let us look at the remaining four.

There is a sense in which the three commandments are all related to each other, and speak of what a rich man should do. Verse 17 spoke of what he should not be as well as where his trust should be--not in his riches, but in the living God.

We need to keep in mind that Paul was speaking to rich believers, not just to rich people generally. Nothing a rich man can do apart from Christ will even help him to lay hold of eternal life. But a rich person, like any other believer, has been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." And this is the emphasis that Paul was making with Timothy. He was to instruct the rich as to what they were to do.

"That they do good" -- The idea here is that the rich were to benefit those who were poor and needy, or anyone who was, for that matter, in need of help. The rich were to be concerned about leaving them in a better condition than they were when they found them. But it is good to remember what Paul told the Galatians in chapter 6, verse 10:

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Nobody can help everyone who is in need. But God providentially leads us to those we can help, and so we are to be mindful of His leading.

Our greatest example of one who did good to people, was our Lord Jesus Christ. When Peter was preaching to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, he had this to say about our Lord:

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him (Acts 10:38).

The people whom the Lord helped were certainly better off as a result of their contact with Him--the lepers who were cleansed, the blind who were given sight, the dead who were raised, the hungry who were fed, etc.

In the book of Hebrews, we have this word:

But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Heb. 13:16).

Even in the Psalms we have this exhortation:

Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed (Psa. 37:3).

This fits right in with our text which tells the rich to trust in the Lord, and then do good.

The point is that the rich are not to seek to be getting richer and richer, but are to realize that the riches they have are from the Lord, and that they are to use those riches to help others who have not been as fortunate as they are. The Bible says too much against the sin of slothfulness for us to interpret this verse in 1 Timothy as meaning that the

rich were to help those who were lazy, or who were professional bums. But often people are really in need and through no real fault of their own. They need help to get on their feet again so that they can help others. Paul's word in Ephesians 4:28 is important for us to remember:

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth (Eph. 4:28).

Remember also what James wrote in his epistle about doing good works:

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone (Jas. 2:15-17).

And so it is true that real faith is always accompanied by good works in which, as we are able, we leave people better than we found them. Rich people have unusual opportunities to do this. This must come from the heart of the rich. Nothing is said to indicate that the poor have any right to demand the help of the rich.

In Paul's epistle to Titus we have a strong emphasis on good works:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.

Let no man despise thee (Titus 2:11-15).

And then in Titus 3:8 we read,

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

It is not that the rich alone are responsible to do good works. All believers have this responsibility. And not all good works have to do with money. The point that Paul seems to be making with Timothy was that a rich man might not realize how much good he can do, and should do, with his money.

Rich people are hardly ever the most happy people in the world. If they are to be happy, they must use their money to help others as the Lord shall lead them.

"That they may be rich in good works" -- "Rich," or riches, always speaks of an abundance. And there is possibly the idea here that a rich man should seek to be just as rich, just as abundant in good works, as he has been in attaining the riches which he has.

"Ready to distribute, willing to communicate" -- These six words are the translation of just two words in the Greek. The first suggests

liberality; the second, eagerness. Paul's word to the church at Corinth would apply here:

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

6:19 Not many of us give enough thought to what Paul calls here, "the time to come." We are thinking of the present time. And we are inclined to live as though we are going to be here forever. But we all know that we are not!

Paul said in verse 7 of this chapter that we didn't bring anything into this world, and we are not going to take anything with us when we leave this world. We all know this, but we forget it. And so here Paul exhorted the rich to remember "the time to come." It really a time-less eternity that he was talking about. There is no question but that the present is preparation for the future. Earlier I read to you the account of the man who was going to tear down his barns and build greater barns. But he was a fool, and he died that very night! There have been many people in every generation who have forgotten eternity, and they have made no preparation for it. The first thing that we need to do is to repent of our sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. And then, with our spiritual eyes open, life takes on a real change, and we are exhorted to set our affection on things above, where Christ is, not on the things of earth. Cf. Col. 3:1-4. We are to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. We need to be rich toward God. We need to lay hold on eternal life. This means that we are to spend our lives here on earth toward making our treasure in heaven as great as we, by the grace of God, can make it.

This is what it means to be "laying up in store...a good foundation against the time to come," that we "may lay hold on eternal life."

May 8, 1995

Let me say a little more about the expression, "lay hold on eternal life." This is the same expression that we had in verse 12. Paul was probably describing what it means to lay hold on eternal life by the exhortation which he gave in verses 11 and 12. It means to grasp something which might get away from you. But it also suggests that it is necessary to make the best use of it.

Spurgeon, in a sermon on these two texts, 1 Timothy 6:12 and 19 (Vol. 33, p. 73, had this to say about verse 12:

Observe that this precept is preceded by another--"Fight the good fight of faith." Those who lay hold on eternal life will have to fight for it. The way of the spiritual life is no easy one; we shall have to contest every step of the way along which it leads us.

To lay hold on eternal life is another way of saying that we need to grow, to mature, in our relationship with the Lord. But the problem is that our flesh opposes it, the Devil opposes it, and there is nothing in the world in which we live that encourages it. The picture we get from this word is that of grasping eternal life, and holding on to it like you could lose

it. We can't lose it, of course, but Paul evidently wanted to arouse Timothy, rich people, and, actually all of the Ephesian church, to see that they had a responsibility to meet in connection with their spiritual growth. The person who doesn't do anything, doesn't grow! And that is just as true of us today as it was of Timothy and the Ephesian believers.

Here Paul had in mind the rich. Their riches were no asset for spiritual growth; in fact, they were a hindrance unless they were used in the right way. For the rich to do as Paul was exhorting them to do required a work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts--making them willing to do the will of God. We all need to keep in mind that we are just pilgrims and strangers here on this earth, and we are here for such a short time. We are going to be in heaven forever! We need to prepare for it now. When we get to heaven, then we will fully realize why we have the commands that we have in the Word of God. We must do everything that will promote eternal life, and avoid everything that would hinder us from making progress in it. All of us received eternal life when the Lord saved us, but just as we grow and make progress as human beings in this life, those of us who know the Lord need to seek to develop the life we have.

The last two verses of this epistle were directed at Timothy, but they apply to all of us just as much as to Timothy.

6:20 Paul knew that he could not continue any longer. He knew that much depended upon how Timothy responded to what he had told him. And so he introduced his conclusion with the words, "O Timothy." If it is possible to underline words by certain expressions, this is certainly one of them. It has an urgent tone to it. Paul obviously knew that the Lord was going to carry out His eternal purposes, but he also knew that the Lord uses people to accomplish what he wanted them to do. I read several years ago, perhaps it was in Spurgeon, that we pray knowing that everything depends upon God, but we work as though it all depended upon us. Sometimes God works directly upon people, but most of the time He uses human beings as His instruments. So it is extremely important for us to be faithful.

So we must not think that we can sit back like we were drinking lemonade on a hot summer day, and expect that somehow the work of the Lord will get done. We have been reading through the lives of the kings of Israel and Judah in our daily Bible reading. Most of the kings did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. As a result, they created all kinds of problems for themselves and for their people. Things did not have to be like that, but men were unfaithful, and God judged them instead of blessing them.

We have an illustration of the use of "O" in the OT when David received the news that Absalom was dead. Remember his plaintive cry recorded for us in 2 Sam. 18:33,

O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

And then in 2 Sam. 19:4 we see that his grief continued. This is what the verse tells us:

But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Paul's word to Timothy was not one of grief, but one of great concern. Perhaps there was a feeling of agony in his heart as he thought how things could go if Timothy were not faithful. Timothy could not avoid seeing how

concerned the Apostle Paul was. "O Timothy."

T. A. Gurney (p. 270) has an excellent statement in his commentary concerning the meaning of "O Timothy." He said this:

What more can there be to say? His solicitous care for Timothy, his sense of the special dangers to which he is exposed, his knowledge of the spiritual possibilities of his position, draw from him one future appeal, one watchword which gathers up into its brief, pregnant force all the teachings and warnings of this Epistle. 'O Timothy,' he cries, 'Guard the deposit.'

"'Guard the deposit'" is a translation of the statement, "Keep that which is committed to thy trust." Paul said a similar thing to Timothy in his second epistle to him:

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.  
That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us (2 Tim. 1:13, 14).

And then we have Paul's exhortation to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2:

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

We can add to these statements the final charge which Paul gave to Timothy in his second epistle. After picturing what the last days would be like, and referring briefly to his own sufferings, he addressed the words to Timothy which we find in 2 Timothy 3:12-4:5. And we see in verses 6 through 8 why Paul was so concerned for Timothy. (Read 2 Tim. 3:12-4:5.)

That which was committed to Timothy's trust was the Word of God. He was to "keep" it. This means that he was to guard it. He was to keep it unchanged. He was to obey it himself, and to proclaim it to others. He was not to turn away from it to teach anything else. Timothy's whole life was to be devoted to the Word of God.

Thayer, in his Greek Lexicon, says that the word \_\_\_\_\_, which Paul used in 1 Timothy 6:20, suggests that the Word will be assaulted from without. In 2 Timothy 4:7 where Paul said, "I have kept the faith," he used a different word for "kept." It is the word \_\_\_\_\_. By it he meant that he had achieved the result of what he was encouraging Timothy to do.

This is a good word for us today. Every generation of the Lord's servants, every generation of the Lord's people, has this charge. The Word of God is going to be under attack in various ways. Often it is denied by those who feel that it is not true, or that it is out-of-date. In our day there is a tendency on the part of many to replace it with music, or with drama, or with films, or with humanistic psychology, or by false interpretations of doctrine.

If our ministry in the church is not mainly and exclusively a ministry of the Word of God, we are not guarding that which has been entrusted to us in our generation. The servants of the Lord are not going to be judged on the basis of how large their congregations were, or how many books they have written, or how well-known they have been. They are going to be judged on how they have used the Word of God. There always have been pressures to get us to turn aside from the Word of God, and there always will be. But we must remain true to our calling regardless of the

influences that get us to do something else. Look at how Paul described some of the dangers that Timothy would face in his ministry. "Profane and vain babblings" -- "Profane" speaks of teaching that unregenerate people accept and live by, in violation of the Word of God. The widespread acceptance of homosexuality is an example of profane teaching. Teaching that men are sinners by nature is rejected by profane teachers. We are hit by these departures from the truth every day that we live, and this often keeps believers from speaking out with the truth of the Word of God.

"Vain babblings" is the translation of one word in the Greek which means the empty discussion of useless matters. Often they are hurtful and dangerous. Ministers will often spend a whole service on a subject which really amounts to nothing, and people go away wondering why they have taken the time to attend such a church. Paul says that such things as these are to be avoided. Anything, regardless of how great may be its acceptance, is to be avoided like a contagious disease.

"And oppositions of science falsely so called" -- The word which is translated "science" in the KJV is just the Greek word for knowledge. Listen to the way these last two verses are translated in the NASB:  
O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"--  
which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you (1 Tim. 6:20-21).

Humanistic psychology and humanistic philosophy have long been enemies of the truth of the Word of God. And we need to stay as far away from them as we can.

But let us go on to the last verse.

6:21 Why was Timothy to avoid "profane and vain babblings," and the opposition of what men call knowledge? Because when men succumb to these things, they turn away from the truth of the Word of God. Many men who started out in the ministry as teachers of the Word have become some of the world's greatest liberal theologians because they began to dabble in the wisdom of men, and finally turned away from "the faith."

Timothy would face the same temptation, but Paul was pleading with him to remain true to the Word of God. Men are snared by possibility of winning the acclaim of men, but what we need is the blessing of God.

What is our safeguard? Paul indicated what it was with the words, "Grace be with thee." That is, the grace of God. It is by the grace of God that we as believers are what we are, and it is only by the grace of God that we will be kept faithful to our calling.

We have Paul's testimony concerning the grace of God in his life in 1 Corinthians 5:10:

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

"Amen." So let it be with Timothy, so let it be with me, and so let it be with you. The truth of the Word of God can stand up against any examination, but its greatest defense is to be seen when it is proclaimed.



Then the hearers realize that it is truly living and powerful far beyond the highest of human wisdom. Cf. 1 Corinthians 2.

Satan attacked Adam and Eve in the very beginning of human history, trying to destroy their confidence in the Word of God. We can see today what has resulted as far as the whole human family is concerned because of Adam's sin. The only way out of our trouble is a personal acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. There is absolutely no solution to the needs of the human heart apart from the Gospel of the grace of God. May God ever keep us faithful to His precious Word.

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