

I TIMOTHY 1:1-2
INTRODUCTION!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Timothy as we are going to begin an in-depth study of this book.

Keep in mind that we just finished up in the book of Jude that dealt with earnestly contending for the faith that was entrusted to us. And we saw how false teachers, apostates, were bringing in destructive doctrines, doctrines of demons into the church and some were allowing them to come right in and teach these things.

As I was praying about this, the Lord lead me to I Timothy. I was going to do Philipians, but I think that will happen when we finish our studies in both I Timothy and II Timothy.

But why these books, why I Timothy?

Here is the reason and I think it is important. Paul put it like this in I Timothy 3:14-15, **“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”**

In other words, Paul is writing to this young pastor about the church, what the church is all about, how the church is to function, what the leadership in the church is all about. And yes, Paul even is going to deal with false teachers, apostates warning Timothy about these things.

Again, I think these two letters that Paul wrote to Timothy are very important in the days we are living in because many don't know what the church is about.

And the church leadership is not helping in this area.

No longer are church members sheep that have been given to local churches so that they can be fed, they can be loved, they can grow and mature in the faith.

Now church members are seen as consumers, and you then have to give the consumer what they want.

What do they want today?

Church members, or what many call consumers today, want to be entertained and you have to give them what they want. And by doing that the leaders in these churches are not giving them what they need!

Paul will speak on that in II Timothy 4:3-4 as he wrote, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”**

We are living in the days when consumers don't want sound doctrine, they want a feel-good message, and they want to be entertained! And if you don't give them what they want, they will go and find teachers who will give them what they want, not what they need!

I think that the late Francis Schaeffer was right when he called this embracing of our culture *“the great evangelical disaster”* and said further that *“the evangelical church has accommodated [itself] to the world.”*

Now, what did Paul tell this young pastor, Timothy?

“Timothy, just give them what they want. You can't fight them. If you do, your church will shrink in numbers. You may even have to get another job to support yourself. But if you want your church to grow and grow, just entertain them, give them what they want!”

No, Paul did not say that. But this is what Paul did say, **“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. . . . But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** II Timothy 4:1-2, 5.

The words that Paul told Timothy are not very popular today, but it does need to be heard and applied. Paul told Timothy that it doesn't matter what they want, you give them the Word of God, you teach them the things of God. In other words – ***TIMOTHY, FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY!***

And yet, that is not what we are seeing today. One writer put it like this regarding what we see happening in the church today. He wrote,

So much of the Church is focused on this god of Entertainment.

The entire ***“service”*** is a show. The music is both worldly and a show. True worship of God is missing as now we substitute “music” for worship (Romans 12:1-2).

The entire ***“church service”*** is a show from beginning to end and it's meant to entertain you.

Biblical, expository teaching is gone as the church now favors more entertainment than anything else. The church, rather than being the ***“one another”*** church of the New Testament, is largely going from one entertaining event to the next. Church signs promote one event after another. The church, instead of seeking to make disciples and spar people from an eternal hell, is largely fixed on being a place of sure pleasure and joy and entertainment.

Where did this come from?

From an institutional view of the Church, the Church has to be promoting entertainment. How else will they come? With TV, movies, theaters, etc. competing with the business driven Church, the institutional church must then produce better plays, better music, more entertainment to keep the people coming back for me.

As John MacArthur called it, ***“Give me that show time religion.”***

Prayer meetings are empty. . . . Evangelism using the Law of God to confront sinners is completely ignored for its ***“offensive language such as sinners.”*** . . .

I once e-mailed a large seeker church to question them biblically why they do what they do.

The CEO-pastor wrote me back and said, ***“We are running 700 people on Sunday mornings. How many do you have coming to your church?”***

His answer is the answer [that] the pragmatic church offers today. The end results justify the means. Who cares about prayer? Who cares about depending on the power of the Holy Spirit to fall on the people and empower us to make disciples? Who cares about preaching the gospel to the lost? As long as 700 people are coming and as long as the church budget is being met, so be it.

- <https://bit.ly/37pt4Ly>

That is interesting to me because if entertainment is what is drawing people to a church, how much entertainment? How big does it have to be? How many lights do we need for the light show? Do we need a smoke machine? How big do the screens need to be? And the list can go on.

Now you may be thinking, ***“Pastor Joe, what do you mean by that?”***

Here is what I mean by that.

Remember the old monster movies like Godzilla! We were entertained by them. They were fun to watch. And as young kids, we loved them!

But today, with the technology we have, it no longer satisfies us. We need better graphics, better visuals, better and better and now we can see a person have their head cut in two and it looks real, not the fake stuff.

Not like the westerns of old where they get shot and a drop of blood is seen on their shirt, and they die.

Today, they get shot and all kinds of body parts are blown off.

The same is true with the church. The entertainment today is not going to work down the road, and you will have to keep getting bigger and better and more and more entertaining!

A few years back . . .

A church in Texas had a basketball theme for March Madness, where an entire court was installed on the altar – err . . . stage.

“Christianity attractive?”, the answer is that Christianity is attractive. What is being done by pop-Christianity is clouding truth and beauty with sensation and indulgence. Pop-Christianity is to spiritual health what Fast Food is to physical health; a cheap alternative that simply appeases the appetites. The Christian faith rests upon the fact that God is beauty, and all His works and His ways are full of His beauty. The Christian is simply left to soak up that beauty; to bask in the light of God’s goodness. This requires obedience, relationship, reflection, and dedication to the God who dwells with His people. No amount of buzzing sounds and flashing lights will sustain a lifelong faith.

I guess you can call me a simpleton. I teach the Word of God, what Paul admonished Timothy to do whether they wanted to hear it or not.

And here's the thing. When I go home to be with the Lord, I will guarantee you that the Lord is not going to say to me, "**Joe, all those years you taught the Word of God. You probably should have eased up a little bit. I mean really, verse by verse through the Bible, Joe, that is not what the people wanted!**"

It may not be what the people wanted, some of them, but it is what the Lord wants me to do. You see, the Lord will not say that I taught the Word of God too much because that is what my role in the body of Christ is all about, and again, Paul will deal with leadership and what that is all about in this first letter he wrote to Timothy!

This post was on Facebook, and it said, "**. . . we should be concerned that so many people in our churches want to be entertained while they worship. We should be concerned when we no longer recognize the difference between the two. And we should be concerned by the growing belief that adding more entertainment value to worship is necessary for the church to accomplish its mission.**"

How true that is. And we have been warned about what is happening and people did not listen. A. W. Tozer went home to be with the Lord way back in 1963, some 60 years ago, and listen to this warning that he gave. He wrote,

For centuries the Church stood solidly against every form of worldly entertainment, recognizing it for what it was – a device for wasting time, a refuge from the disturbing voice of the conscience, a scheme to divert attention from moral accountability.

For this she got herself abused roundly by the sons of this world.

But of late she has become tired of the abuse and has given over the struggle. She appears to have decided that if she cannot conquer the great god Entertainment she may as well join forces with him and make use she can of his powers.

So today we have the astonishing spectacle of millions of dollars being poured into the unholy job of providing earthly entertainment for the so-called sons of heaven.

Religious entertainment is in many places rapidly crowding out the serious things of God. Many churches these days have become little more than poor theaters where fifth-rate “producers” peddle their shoddy wares with the full approval of evangelical leaders who can even quote a holy text in defense of their delinquency. And hardly a man dares raise his voice against it.

- A. W. Tozer

How sad and how true that is. He gave the warning and instead of listening and getting back to what the church is to be about, we have embraced this idea of entertainment because it does add numbers.

What is missing in all of this is the work of the Holy Spirit because, by what we are doing, we are adding to the church and not the Lord! And thus, like I have said, the entertainment has to get flashier and bigger and better or people will move on to the next church that is keeping up with the world!

So this is a very important letter or I should say two letters that Paul wrote.

This morning we will just be doing an – ***INTRODUCTION!***

So with that said, let’s begin reading in I Timothy chapter 1 beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study His Word.

I TIMOTHY 1

VERSES 1-2

This first letter to Timothy is part of a group of three letters that Paul wrote that have been called, “*The Pastoral Epistles.*”

These three letters are: I Timothy, II Timothy and Titus and they were among the last letters that Paul wrote and thus, all that was important, all that was on his heart, the burden of his heart, he shares with Timothy and Titus who were leaders in the churches in Ephesus and on the Island of Crete respectively.

As the book of Acts closes, we are told, “**Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.**” Acts 28:30-31.

Remember that Paul was in prison in Rome, but that is not the end of the story for Paul.

Paul was released from prison for a time since there were no real charges against him.

And during this time Paul revisited some of the churches he ministered to, including Ephesus and maybe traveling as far as Spain.

While in Ephesus though, he sees that savage wolves came into the church and savage wolves rose up from within the church trying to bring in destructive heresy’s just as Paul warned them when he met with the Ephesian elders in Acts chapter 20.

Paul said this to them, he gave to them this warning, **“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”** Acts 20:28-30.

So they should have been on guard for this, but they were not even though they were warned. It sounds so familiar because we were warned by many and by God about the deceptions in the last days, and how many churches, how many leaders and how many people did not heed that warning!

Paul warned Timothy in I Timothy 4:1, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”**

Paul does not pull any punches or water things down. If you are teaching things that are contrary to the Word of God, then you are being deceived by these demonic spirits and you are following these – ***DOCTRINES OF DEMONS!***

And Jesus warns us in Matthew 24:4, and this is dealing with what is going to happen during the Tribulation Period, and we are told, **“And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you.’”**

And yes, this is speaking of the Tribulation Period and the church will not be here for that, we will be Raptured, or the Lord will come for His Bride, the Church before He pours out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world. But make no mistake about it, the time leading up to the start of the Tribulation Period will be filled with deception as well.

These are the pre-labor pains as the labor is getting closer to begin!

Now, because of this false teaching by these false teachers, Paul tries to correct these errors that had come into the church and as he leaves the area, he leaves Timothy in Ephesus to deal with the problems, to lead the people in the right direction. In a sense, he was their pastor.

As Paul left Timothy in Ephesus, he continued on to Macedonia where he wrote this first letter to Timothy and Titus in around 63-64 A. D. Titus being written shortly after this first letter.

Then, in 64 A. D. Nero burned Rome and blamed the Christians for this devastation and by 66 A. D., as the persecution against Christians grew, Nero had Paul arrested again and while in prison this time he wrote his final letter, II Timothy as he was preparing for his execution.

The exact date of Paul being put to death for his faith we don't know for sure. But according to tradition we are told that Paul was beheaded just west of Rome on the Ostian Way in around 66 A. D., some put it at 67 A. D. In that timeframe.

Now if I were to ask you, ***“What is the church to be about? What is the church to do?”*** How would you answer that?

Today I think many have lost the concept of what a church is all about, who we are, what we are to do, because of all these false teachers with their false doctrines that they have brought into the church.

One author put it like this as he gives us some examples of what people think a church is all about. This is what he wrote,

- ***Some feel that the church is an organization led by a hierarchy of leaders - like the army.***
- ***Others think that the church is a social relief agency whose sole purpose for existing is to distribute to the community those things that will meet the needs of the people in that community - kind of like the Red Cross.***

- *There are those who think of the local church in a very utilitarian [practical] way - they see it as a place that provides valuable services at important points in life - a useful place to go if a person dies, gets married, has a baby or wants to get baptized.*
- *Many today have come to think of the church as nothing more than a social club, where a group of people who share the same religious views get together and talk, drink coffee and have a good time.*
- *And then, of course, there are a great majority of people who think of the church purely in terms of steeples and stained-glass windows - in other words the church is the building on a particular street in a particular neighborhood - that's it!*

- Source Unknown

Because we have lost the concept of what a church is, we have also lost what our mission is. You see, the church is not some organization, it is a living organism, we are the body of Christ and Jesus is the head of this body, guiding us and directing us.

One person put it like this, an interesting perspective on what the church truly is. He wrote,

The fact that the Church is a **“Body”** made up of **“living members”** shows that it is not an **“Organization,”** but an **“ORGANISM.”**

An **“Organization”** is made up of distinct units like the doors, windows, roof, floors, etc., of a building, that may be removed and replaced by new parts without destroying the integrity of the building; but a human body is an organism.

You cannot remove an eye, or ear, or arm, or foot, or even a fingernail or tooth, without destroying the integrity of the body and causing a mutilation. So, we see from this for Christ to lose One Member of His Body (the Church) is to **MUTILATE** it.

- Clarence Larkin

How true that is. Paul put it like this in I Corinthians 12:12-27, **“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”**

Paul speaks of the body, made up of many parts and yet all those different parts make up the body.

DNA is the building blocks of our body and yet how vastly different each body part is, it does different things, but it is still one body.

In Christ there is a diversity of people with gifts and yet we still are one body!

The church is not an organization but a living organism and that means that every single member of that organism needs to be involved, for the betterment of the body of Christ!

And, as Paul said here in these verses we just looked at, “**But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.**” I Corinthians 12:20.

This is so important for us to understand. We are all part of the body of Christ and thus, if one-person hurts, we hurt with them. If one-person rejoices, we rejoice with them. We are inner connected you might say.

Think of it like this. Have you ever stubbed your toe before? I’m sure you have. Now is it just your toe that hurts? No, it shoots up throughout your body.

Paul’s point is this. It doesn’t matter how different you might be from another member, you are part of the body of Christ and if one hurts, you hurt, if one rejoices, you rejoice because that is how closely related to each other we are, as I have said.

Just as the body is made up of many members, so is the body of Christ and yet we still are individuals!

But think about it, apart we are nothing but together we make-up the body of Christ, a living organism that is impacting the world for Jesus!

You see, for those who think “***I don’t need the church, I can do church at home!***” you are wrong, and you are in rebellion to what God has said. Now I am not talking about those who are sick and can’t make it to church because of that. I am talking about people who choose not to come to church when they can come!

Paul said in Hebrews 10:24-25, “**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**”

We are the body of Christ! May we not forget that. And for those who can't make it to church because of illness or whatever, they too are part of the body of Christ, and we need to be praying for them as well!

So what is the church?

The church is not a social agency that is just around to help the needs of others. Yes, it is part of what the church is about, but if that is all you are doing, handing out things to people to help them, you have only helped them for a short period of time and apart from Christ, they are still lost!

And, of course, the church is not just to be married and die in.

The church is not a social club to gather and fellowship.

And the church is not a building, like I have said, it is a living organism made up of people from all over the world who have come to saving faith in Christ!

The Greek word translated “*church*” in the New Testament is the word, *EKKLESIA*.” It is a word that literally means, “*An assembly of called out ones.*”

And the point being made is that this speaks of those who have come to Christ and have been called out of the world to a life of separation and service to God. We are God's own special people.

And thus, our responsibility, as ambassadors for Christ, is to bring the Good News, the Gospel message to a lost and dying world. We are to shine for Jesus and let people see Jesus in us. We are here to worship God. We are here to make disciples.

That is the mission of the church, to bring the Gospel to the lost. God has given us the responsibility to do this. He could do it far better but again, He uses us and that is the mission of the church.

Now as you read through these three Pastoral Epistles you will see a theme emerge and Paul tells us what that theme is here in I Timothy 3:14-15, verses we have read, but listen again to what Paul wrote, **“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”**

That is what the church is to be about, ***THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH!***

If you don't have proper doctrine, how can you bring a proper Gospel? You can't and that can be dangerous, it can have eternal consequences attached to them.

And here in Ephesus, things must have been out of order and Paul wants Timothy to get things back to the way they were. The truth must be spoken to dispel the lies that were being spoken, the Gospel message must go forward and spread to people all over the world!

Thus, Paul will share regarding ***“public worship, the selection and qualifications of church leaders, the pastor's personal life and public ministry, how to confront sin in the church, the role of women, the care of widows, and how to handle money . . .”*** (John MacArthur).

And I think these letters are so important for us today, as I have said. The reason being is that as you read these letters you will see that the focus is on teaching the Word of God, sound doctrine, healthy teaching, which is lacking so much in the church today. We need to get back to the basics and do what we were called to do!

And, hopefully we will understand these things as we go through I & II Timothy.

Now, who was Timothy?

Timothy was the son of an unbelieving Greek father and a believing Jewish mother named Eunice and a believing Jewish grandmother named Lois, (Acts 16:1, II Timothy 1:5).

This family lived in Lystra where Paul met them on his first missionary journey, (Acts 16:1), and it is possible that as Paul shared the Gospel message, Timothy received Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

The reason I say that is Paul often speaks of being a spiritual father to Timothy.

Keep in mind that Timothy was a young man, and he had his work cut out for him there in Ephesus. And when I say young man, he was probably in his mid-thirties at this time!

And with all he had to deal with there in Ephesus, Paul writes Timothy this letter to encourage him, to equip him for the work that was before him.

And Timothy needed this encouragement, I don't think he was as bold as Paul was. And that is what Paul is doing, encouraging him in the work and by the time we get to II Timothy, he is admonishing Timothy to continue on in the work because Paul was going home to be with the Lord!

Who wrote this letter and the other Pastoral Epistles?

Up until the nineteenth century and the rise of higher criticism, Paul was considered the author of these Pastoral Epistles.

But no matter what these so-called higher critics say, the evidence is overwhelming that Paul wrote these letters.

We see second-century church Fathers, like Polycarp, Clement of Rome and Ignatius speak of Paul writing these letters.

In the third century we see Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian quote passages from these epistles and stating that Paul wrote them.

In trying to discredit the Bible people are discrediting their own work! The Bible will stand no matter the opposition, and men will come and go, but God's Word will remain!

First of all, we see who wrote this letter, it was Paul. And we have spoken about that already but those who want to discredit the Bible, they will make up all kinds of ideas why this wasn't Paul.

I will go with what I read here; it was Paul. And, as the Scriptures tell us, **“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”** Proverbs 30:5-6.

Keep in mind that before he was saved Paul was called *“Saul”* or *“asked for, prayed for.”* I think he was someone who they looked up to, he was a brilliant Pharisee! They wanted to hear what Saul had to say and Saul loved the attention.

But then, after he got saved, they called him *“Paul”* which means *“little,”* or *“small.”*

Why did his name change. It may have changed to keep him humble, or it may have been related to his physical stature.

From history we know that Paul was not a big, strong, good-looking guy! Sorry, that is just what history has said about this man.

We are told from history, from a second-century writer, that Paul was *“A man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs . . . with eyebrows that met together and a hooked nose.”*

We do get an indication of that from the Scriptures. In II Corinthians 2:10:10 we are told, **“For his letters, they say, ‘are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.’”**

“His letters may be harsh, strong, heavy but when you look at the guy, not that impressive!” is what they were saying.

In other words, he would not be a rock star pastor today, but God was not looking for a rock star pastor. He was looking for a man who was faithful in his service to the Lord and Paul was the man!

Notice how Paul opens up this letter to Timothy. He says that he is **“an apostle of Jesus Christ.”**

Keep in mind that the word **“apostle”** means *“one who has been sent forth with a commission.”*

Think of it like an ambassador or someone who goes on a mission representing a king or head of state, and here Paul is representing Jesus Christ.

So in the broadest sense of the word, we are all apostles or ambassadors for Christ as we go out into the world representing Him. We are not part of the group of twelve apostles, that office has passed off the scene!

Paul spoke of this in II Corinthians 5:20, where he wrote, **“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”**

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“So we are Christ’s ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us. We [as Christ’s personal representatives] beg you for His sake to lay hold of the divine favor [now offered you] and be reconciled to God.”**

In other words, because all that Christ has done for us, reconciling us back to God, we, as His ambassadors need to bring that message of reconciliation to the world.

Keep in mind that an ambassador doesn’t speak for himself but for the one who sent him, and for us it is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ!

Thus, as we go out, we implore people; we come alongside people urging them to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, to not allow the terror of the Lord to come upon them, the wrath of God for their rejection of Jesus!

So, in the broadest sense of the word, we are all apostles of Jesus Christ, His ambassadors to bring the Gospel message to the world, as I have said.

And please understand that Paul did not obtain this title, you might say, by his own will or efforts, it is God who had given him this position.

Now why is this so important? I mean, Timothy already knows who Paul is, so why state the obvious?

First of all, this letter was not just for Timothy, but it was to be read in the churches. And, because Timothy is dealing with heresy in the church there in Ephesus and maybe some did not want to listen to Timothy, maybe they didn’t believe what he was saying, Paul is coming with the authority of God and thus, this letter will or should settle the matter.

Then Paul speaks of “**our hope**” and let’s look at this for a minute.

Keep in mind that Paul links God the Father and Jesus together in giving this command and once again, as the Scriptures teach, the deity of Jesus Christ.

Thus, this plan of salvation by God the Father and carried out by God the Son, Jesus; the second person of the Holy Trinity, gives us hope for the future because of what Jesus has done in the past, saving us from our sins by paying in full the penalty for our sins.

In other words, the hope of getting into heaven is only found in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, He is our hope of glory!

But keep in mind that apart from Christ, there is no hope for the people of this world as this story shows us. We are told,

A group of students visited a psychiatric institution to observe a variety of mental illnesses. One of the individuals was a tragic case. He was referred to as “*No hope Carter.*”

He was a victim of a venereal disease and was going through its final stages when the brain is affected. Before he began losing his mind, his doctors told him that there was no known cure for him. He begged for a ray of hope but was told the disease would run its course and then end in his death.

Gradually his brain deteriorated, and he became more and more despondent. Two weeks before his death he paced in his small room. He was in mental agony and his eyes stared blankly. Over and over he muttered two words, “*No hope! No hope!*”

- Source Unknown

Think about that for a minute and apply it to the lost. Yes, they may say that they have hope in life after death or some even hope that there is the great nothingness, which I don't understand how that is hope, but they hold onto that.

But let's play this out. Imagine that you are drowning in the ocean, and you are about to go under for the last time.

And here comes a boat to save you. You have hope that the people on board will be able to rescue you. All your faith is in them.

And as they come alongside you, instead of throwing you a life preserver, they throw you an anchor!

What happened to your hope?

It sank down to the bottom of the ocean!

That is what happens when people place their hope in heaven apart from Christ, their hopes will be dashed!

Thus, we, as ambassadors for Christ, bring forth great hope, the Gospel message to a world that is need of true hope, not a false hope!

Peter put it like this in Acts 4:12, "**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**"

Peter tells them, and us, that there is no salvation apart from Jesus, *NONE!* Remember what Jesus said in John 14:6, "**... 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'**" Why is that so hard for people to understand? Because they reject what Jesus said!

Salvation only comes through Jesus Christ – there is no other way! And Peter is not ashamed to speak forth the Gospel message and neither should we!

But like so many today, they choose to believe that all roads lead to God! That is their hope you might say.

One writer put it like this. He wrote, *“The exclusivism of Christianity goes against the grain of our religiously pluralistic society. A chapel built at the North Pole in February 1959 by the men of Operation Deep Freeze 4 typifies the prevalent attitude today toward religious belief. The structure contained an altar, over which was hung a picture of Jesus, a crucifix, a star of David, and a lotus leaf (Representing the Buddha). On the wall of the chapel was an inscription that read ‘Now it can be said that the earth turns on the point of faith.’*

Christians preach an exclusive Christ in an inclusive age. Because of that, we are often accused of being narrow-minded, even intolerant.

Many paths, it is said, lead to the top of the mountain of religious enlightenment. How dare we insist that ours is the only one?”

Again, people can believe whatever they want, but if that belief is not based in reality, it is a false hope that they are holding onto and in the end, they will miss out on heaven because the reality of it all is that – ***JESUS ALONE SAVES!***

As Paul moves on in verse 2, we see him mention Timothy, **“my true son in the faith.”**

And I think the idea here is that Timothy was saved through the ministry of Paul and thus, he was a spiritual son in the faith, as I have said!

In most of Paul’s letters we see the greeting of **“grace and peace”** spoken of.

But it is different here. We see here in I Timothy, and also in II Timothy and Titus, the Pastoral Epistles, we see mercy added!

Why is that?

First of all, grace speaks of getting what we don't deserve, God's unmerited favor, unmerited love upon us. It speaks of all the divine resources needed for Christian life and service that God freely gives to us.

God gives to us heaven and we don't deserve it, not at all!

And peace speaks of a peace with God that is only obtained as we receive grace into our lives through Jesus Christ. This peace is that inner tranquility that comes from leaning on the Lord.

It is as Paul said in Romans 5:1-2, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

Then he adds mercy. And mercy speaks of not getting what we do deserve, death.

And with mercy we also see that this is received by His grace, we don't deserve it, but He freely gives it to us.

Think of mercy also like this. It speaks of God's compassionate care and protection for one who is needy and prone to fail.

Let's face it, both Timothy and Titus needed to hear this and I am sure every pastor needs to hear this, as well as each and every one of us. We need all three in our lives to encourage us to go forward.

Let me share this with you.

Why did Paul alter his traditional greeting to include the word *“mercy”* when he wrote these personal letters?

Well, in all three of these letters, Paul was writing to someone in the ministry who felt overwhelmed by the affairs of life.

For instance, when he wrote his first letter to Timothy (the book of First Timothy), Timothy was feeling overwhelmed by the phenomenal growth in the church under his care.

Such growth is every pastor's dream; however, Timothy was young, and he was pastoring what had become the world's largest church. This was therefore a very challenging time in Timothy's life.

Timothy was feeling so challenged that he apparently wrote a letter to Paul, asking him for advice on how to choose leaders for his fast-growing congregation. As the young minister faced this daunting task, he needed to be reminded that there was special "*mercy*" available to help him in his time of need.

Thus, when Paul wrote to Timothy, he inserted the word "*mercy*" between the traditional greeting of "*grace*" and "*peace*." He said, "*Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace . . .*" (1 Timothy 1:2).

- <http://bit.ly/2S07sfM>

I think the main problem for Timothy was that he was overwhelmed with the problems that had come into the church and then how to deal with them, even with elders! And Paul is going to try and encourage Timothy and exhort him, like Jude wrote, to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to him.

As I begin to close our study this morning, listen to these words from Warren Wiersbe as he sums this letter up for us. He wrote,

“Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.”

That advertisement appeared in a London newspaper and thousands of men responded! It was signed by the noted Arctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and that was what made the difference.

If Jesus Christ had advertised for workers, the announcement might have read something like this:

“Men and women wanted for difficult task of helping to build My church. You will often be misunderstood, even by those working with you. You will face constant attack from an invisible enemy. You may not see the results of your labor, and your full reward will not come till after all your work is completed. It may cost you your home, your ambitions, even your life.”

In spite of the demands that He makes, Jesus Christ receives the **“applications”** of many who gladly give their all for Him. He is certainly the greatest Master for whom anyone could work, and the task of building His church is certainly the greatest challenge to which a believer could give his life.

Timothy was one young man who responded to Christ’s call to help build His church. He was one of the Apostle Paul’s special assistants. Along with Titus, Timothy tackled some of the tough assignments in the churches that Paul had founded. Timothy was brought up in a religious home (2 Tim 1:5) and had been led to faith in Christ by Paul himself. This explains why Paul called Timothy “my own [genuine] son in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2).

Timothy was born of mixed parentage: his mother was a Jewess, his father a Greek, He was so devoted to Christ that his local church leaders recommended him to Paul, and Paul added him to his *“missionary staff”* (Acts 16:15). Paul often reminded Timothy that he was chosen for this ministry (1 Tim 1:18; 4:14). Timothy was faithful to the Lord (1 Cor 4:17) and had a deep concern for God’s people (Phil 2:20-22).

But in spite of his calling, his close association with Paul, and his spiritual gifts, Timothy was easily discouraged. The last time Paul had been with Timothy, he had encouraged him to stay on at Ephesus and finish his work (1 Thess 1:3). Apparently Timothy had physical problems (1 Tim 5:23) as well as periods of discouragement; and you get the impression that some of the church members were not giving their pastor the proper respect as God’s servant (1 Tim 4:12; 2 Tim 2:6-8).

Ephesus would not be the easiest place to pastor a church. (Are there any *“easy places”*? I doubt it.)

The city was devoted to the worship of Diana, the patroness of the sexual instinct. Her lascivious images helped promote sexual immorality of all kinds (see Acts 19). Paul had done a great work in Ephesus during his three-year ministry, so *“all they which dwelt in [the province of] Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 19:10).

It was not easy for Timothy to follow a man like Paul! Of course, Satan had his workers in the city; for wherever there are spiritual opportunities there are also satanic obstacles (1 Cor 16:8-9).

Paul wrote the letter we call 1 Timothy to encourage Timothy, to explain how a local church should be managed, and to enforce his own authority as a servant of God.

It is not easy to be a leader in a church because you are dealing with all kinds of people. And everyone has their own ideas of what to do, how to run things and when it comes to teaching, look out!

Paul is going to now get into some of the problems that came into the church there in Ephesus and he wants Timothy to deal with it.

False teaching is like a cancer that may start out in one location but if it is not removed, it will spread to the entire body!

And we will see that next time in our study of I Timothy as Paul tells Timothy, **“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia - remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”** I Timothy 1:3-7.

We will dig into that next time in our in-depth study of I Timothy!