

Saint Paul's first epistle to Timothy (Intro - Ch 2)

Introduction:

Saint Paul wrote 14 epistles out of the 27 books of the New Testament. These 14 epistles can be broken down into the following:

Educational	Pastoral	Personal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Romans•1st Corinthians•2nd Corinthians•Galatians•Ephesians•Philippians•Colossians•1st Thessalonians•2nd Thessalonians•Hebrews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•1st Timothy•2nd Timothy•Titus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Philemon

The Educational epistles are epistles that were written to a group of people to teach them about a topic.

The Pastoral epistles were written to provide spiritual guidance and instruct specific leaders like St. Timothy and St. Titus. St. Paul wrote the letter to St. Timothy to clarify his pastoral commitments in Ephesus.

The Personal epistle is an epistle that St. Paul wrote to Philemon for personal reasons.

Who is St. Timothy?

- ✠ He believed in Christ during St. Paul's 1st missionary journey in Lystra ~ 46 A.D
- ✠ He was born of a Greek father and Jewish mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) who taught him the Holy Scriptures but he was not circumcised.
- ✠ St. Paul circumcised him (Acts 16:22) so he can preach in synagogues.
- ✠ St. Paul did not believe that the circumcision is a must for salvation (Galatians 5:2). He did not circumcise Titus as he was Greek and was serving the Gentiles.
- ✠ St. Paul ordained St. Timothy as bishop of Ephesus.
- ✠ The name Timothy comes from a Greek name that means "In God's honor", "honored by God" or "honoring God".

What do we know about the epistle:

- ✠ **When:** Written in ~ 64 A.D. after St. Paul came out of his first imprisonment
- ✠ **Where:** Macedonia
- ✠ **Who:** St. Paul to St. Timothy

What is the theme of this epistle?

The epistle discusses how the role of the Church is to manifest the Kingdom of God on earth – “Heaven on Earth”.

To accomplish this, the Church’s function is to connect both apostolic doctrine/teachings and worship.

The epistle included other themes such as:

- ✠ The role of the clergy (practical teaching about Pastoral work during the apostolic era)
- ✠ Combating heresies
- ✠ Care for women, widows, and slaves
- ✠ Dealing with money and the ministry.

This epistle was distinguished from the rest of the epistles in the New Testament by presenting the hierarchy of the church in the apostolic era.

Timothy was a young minister and was called to be a bishop in the city of Ephesus. Just like him, we will also be called for ministry to serve in church, at work, at school and in our homes.

Chapter 1:

Greeting (v. 1-2):

The epistle starts off by the regular greeting that St. Paul uses in the epistles. The typical Pauline greeting is expanded to “grace, peace, and mercy”. St. Paul sends encouraging words to a young minister emphasizing that Timothy’s call is from God, just like St. Paul’s call.

St. Paul mentions that he is an apostle of Christ by the *commandment of GOD. He shows the hierarchy of the church and supports his words by saying “apostle” because if they reject his teaching, they are rejecting God.

St. Paul calls Timothy “a true son” (genuos – the original, true, genuine, or real son) as St. Paul is Timothy’s spiritual father. This fatherhood reflects the heavenly Fatherhood of God, just as the Church reflects heaven on earth. The Church is a new family in faith.

* Commandment here came from the Greek origin that means a “King’s or military” command, non-negotiable nor retractable (i.e. he is committed to complete this work).

Opposing the wrong and non-beneficial teachings (v. 3-4):

St. Paul uses the word “urge” not order and this reminds us of the importance of using gentle words in service.

St. Paul urges Timothy to stay in Ephesus to reply to “other doctrine”, which in Greek, means “non-orthodox teaching”. His main purpose in ordaining St. Timothy as bishop in Ephesus is to prevent false teachers from spreading their wrong beliefs.

St. Paul shines some light on Jewish and Greek practices at this time of church growth. He asks Timothy not to follow fables and endless genealogies. The Jews used to boast of their ancestry, saying our grandfather is from the tribe of Levi or our father David, etc. The Greeks used to believe that their Gods can marry humans and they would go back and relate themselves to their Gods. All these fables do not lead to Godly edification for the growth of the faith.

Opposing Legalism with Grace (v. 5-11):

St. Paul sends a clear message to Timothy illustrating that the purpose of commandment is to love from a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith. This reminds us of the famous commandment:

Deuteronomy 6:5 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”. This is not only an Old Testament commandment but it extends to the New Testament as in Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30. Without loving God with all our hearts, we will stay occupied with fables and endless non-beneficial talk that holds us back from growing deeper in our spiritual relationship with God.

St. Paul emphasizes that those who went astray from the true love of God are occupied with idle talk, hoping to be teachers of the law of Moses without enough knowledge.

St. Paul then highlights an important concept that the Jews did not comprehend. He stated that the law is not made for a righteous person but for the lawless. The law was not put to test how good a person is, but rather to guide the lawless, ungodly and sinners to Christ.

The law is then put for the lawless, insubordinate, unholy and profane.

Lawless and insubordinate: Insubordinate are those who refuse to obey orders; they are those who break the law knowingly.

Unholy and Profane: living in sin with no shame. They do not care to live in the sin.

Fornicators and sodomites: Adulterers and those who are impure in contrary to nature

Kidnappers: those who kidnap people to sell them as slaves at that time

Perjurers: a person who tells lies in court when they have promised to tell the truth

St. Paul’s Example of Salvation by Grace (v.12 -17):

Ministers love God by loving others – this is the commandment St. Paul was living by.

St. Paul recounts his own personal experience; he was a blasphemer and persecutor (v.13) but was shown the practicality of God’s love.

St. Paul’s honesty and humility are remarkable; he has not lost his sense of sin and not ashamed of calling himself a sinner.

God was glorified in St. Paul through becoming an example for all of us; a sinner who turned into a great saint. Our sins have only one cure which is Christ Himself.

Before knowing Christ, St. Paul was the perfect man (in his own eyes). In Philippians 3:5-6, St. Paul says about himself, “I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.”

St. Paul saw himself flawless in the law but when he saw Christ and got to know Him, he believes now that he is the chief of sinners.

We see a very vivid application to what St. Paul mentioned in the previous verses. He thanks God who entrusted him with His service although he was a blasphemer and persecutor to the Church of God. He mentions that God was merciful to him as he did it ignorantly in unbelief. He persecuted Christians because he had zeal for the Jewish belief and he thought that this was the right way to show his zeal.

God was not only merciful but He made him an apostle. This was because St. Paul showed faith and love. *“He (St. Paul) says he received mercy not through his own merits, but through the mercies of God” - St. Augustine*

Timothy Called to Faithfulness (v. 18-20):

Timothy’s ministry is the fulfillment of the specific prophecies about spreading the Gospel. A minister has to fight the good fight to preserve God’s commandments.

Faith and good conscience is what we need to achieve victory against false teachings. Deviating from faith results in “shipwreck”.

St. Paul mentions two of those who have rejected the faith. Hymenaeus and Alexander were ex-communicated because of their pride. This was not a punishment to them but a way to protect the rest of the people from their false teaching.

Hymenaeus was mentioned in 2nd Timothy and he drifted away from the correct teaching. Alexander was also mentioned in 2nd Timothy and he rejected the voice of God and was not good to St. Paul.

Both “were delivered to Satan”: This refers to the excommunication from the church mentioned in Galatians (1:8-9), “Let God’s curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.” The authority of excommunication comes from the priesthood that Christ gave his disciples (Matthew 18).

They were mentioned here as a reminder to the young minister St. Timothy that it is not only enough to strive in his service, but he must also strive well, that is to present the commandments as they are, not deviating from the commandment of God, extended from the Old Testament to the New Testament in one spirit and one mind.

Chapter 2:

Faithfulness in Prayer (v.1-7)

The Church is an assembly devoted to worship God, which leads us into a personal relationship with Him.

- ✠ Elements of worship (v.1):
 - ✠ **Supplication:** pleading for our needs.
 - ✠ **Prayer:** entering into a deep and loving personal relationship with Him and for Him alone.
 - ✠ **Intersessions:** offering requests on behalf of all men.
 - ✠ **Giving thanks:** constant thanksgiving and praise to God.

First of all: before anything, before service, before giving a talk, before outreach.

Made for all men: For everyone, both our friends and our enemies.

For kings and all who are in authority: we pray for the kings and the rulers. We see this many times in our prayers, for example, in the litany of the king in the liturgy of St. Cyril, and in Pascha. We pray for the kings and those in authority so that we feel peaceful as a society and rid ourselves from any enmity we feel towards them.

Solomon said in **Proverbs (21:1)** **“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes”**. So, we pray for our leaders to have a will that is according to God’s will.

Desires all men to be saved: God’s will is to have all men saved so we should never ever pray against someone because we know that this will definitely be against God’s will. We know that God does not wish the death of the sinner but rather that he returns and lives.

St. Paul speaks about the salvation of mankind, and how there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (v.5).

One Mediator: In the early church, Gnosticism was a heresy claiming that since we have one Mediator which is Christ, then saints cannot intercede on our behalf. However, this is incorrect. In our faith, we believe in two types of intercessions

- 1) redemptive intercession** only through Christ to redeem us and restore us.
- 2) supplication intercession** to pray on our behalf so that Christ redeem us back and forgive us our sins.

The Man Christ Jesus: Salvation only happened through the incarnate Jesus Christ who came to earth to die for us. Gnosticism claimed that Christ's body was just a myth and that He was in St. Mary's womb with a spirit only and not a full human body.

The priest prays in the confession at the end of the liturgy, "Truly I believe that His divinity parted not from His humanity for a single moment, nor a twinkling of an eye." Through His body, Christ shared humanity with humanity and that is how Christ is in the Father and we are in Him. "When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20).

St. Paul continues to correct the teachings of the Gnostics (v.6) by mentioning that Christ gave Himself as a ransom (sacrifice) for all people; not just the Jews, and not to only the best people like the Gnostics believed.

Testified in due time: to be revealed in the best time for salvation.

Instructions for Male Worshipers (v. 8):

- ✠ St. Paul asks that men should pray without anger or quarrel.
- ✠ Prayer should not be confined to a specific place as the Jews used to believe.
- ✠ **Men:** here it means men and women. 1 Corinthians 16:13 "Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong" [In Greek it says, Be courageous. Be men]. St. Paul uses an expression to mean that men and women should pray and be serious about it.
- ✠ **Everywhere:** this does not mean that we ignore our private prayer. Matthew 6:5-6 says, "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you." However, there are times when we pray secretly and times when we pray all together as in the church.
- ✠ **Holy Hands:** this means that our prayer cannot be separated from our deed. True prayer comes from inside our hearts, and through our mouths. It cannot be accepted if separated from spiritual work and true struggle in Jesus Christ.

Instructions for Female Worshipers (v.9-15):

Women are asked to concern themselves with inner ornamentations rather than the outer ones.

St. Paul is requesting that women care for their inner beauty and preparation. He asks them to come to prayer with no expensive/sophisticated clothing, but rather to focus on preparing their inward selves. 1 Peter 3:3-6 reads, “Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”

Christ is every woman’s bridegroom, the clothing that honours and satisfies Him is: meekness, chastity, and carrying Him in us.

- ✦ Our church emphasizes the fact that men and women are equal but have different roles.
- ✦ St. Paul does not overlook the role of a women in the education of her family.
- ✦ The church relies on the woman to raise her family in the fear of God, to teach her children to walk in faith, love, holiness and self-control. It is the women who raise the saints and offer them to the Church in their children.