

Date: September 21, 2009

Reading: 1 Timothy

We first met Timothy in our reading of Acts. As Paul and Silas journeyed together on the apostle's second missionary journey, they came to Lystra (Acts 16:1). Timothy was one of the disciples there and had a good reputation among the other disciples at Lystra and Iconium. Timothy's mother (and his grandmother, as we learn later – 2 Timothy 1:5) was Jewish and a believer, but his father was a Greek.

Timothy joined the other two men on their journey. It was perhaps not the "beginning" of the relationship between Timothy and Paul; the apostle had visited Lystra on his first preaching journey and probably knew Timothy from that time. It was, however, to be a close relationship (see 1 Timothy 6:20) which would last until the end of the apostle's life. He described Timothy to the Corinthians as his "beloved and faithful son in the faith" (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Timothy 1:2).

Several years down the road, Paul would write to the Philippians that Timothy was a caring individual whose character had been proven in the time that he had "served with [Paul] in the gospel" (2:20-22). He was a man who had "carefully followed" the good doctrine (teaching) of Christ (1 Timothy 4:6).

Paul's purpose in writing his first epistle to Timothy was to teach the younger man "how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God," the church of the living God (3:14-15). Paul gave Timothy extensive instructions regarding his work at Ephesus (where Timothy was working at the time of this epistle – 1:3).

The apostle warned Timothy about some who desired to be teachers (1:3-7; 6:3-5, 20-21). He informed Timothy about the kind of men who should serve as elders (3:1-7) and deacons (3:8-13) and how the young evangelist (minister – 4:6) should treat the various groups within the church at Ephesus (5:1-2), particularly widows and elders (chapter 5) and the wealthy (chapter 6).

Paul urged Timothy to "give attention to reading" and to "meditate on these things" (4:13a, 15). Good advice for us also!

Happy reading,
Allen

Date: February 4, 2010

Reading: 1 Timothy 1-3

What does sound doctrine do for us?

- 1) It results in godly edification in faith (1:4). The person who listens to sound doctrine is built up in God's service.
- 2) It results in sincere love that arises from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith (1:5). The person guided by sound doctrine has cleansed his heart and conscience from dead works by the blood of Jesus to serve the Living God (Hebrews 9:14).
- 3) It condemns lawlessness and ungodliness and the actions related to their fruit (1:9-10). Sound doctrine is not politically correct, but rather calls sin what it is. This condemnation of sin is not self-righteous, but based on love for the sinner's soul.
- 4) It reveals the grace and mercy of God (1:13-14). Even though Paul felt the enormity of his sins (he was the chief of sinners), he understood the love of God through the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus used Paul as an example of the longsuffering love of God.
- 5) It is the thing that those who are saved desire to know (2:4). Do you hunger and thirst for that knowledge?

What is sound doctrine doing for you? The only way that we can benefit from sound doctrine is to learn it and live it.

Tim

Date: February 5, 2010

Reading: 1 Timothy 4-6

“Be an example to the believers” (4:12). Paul instructed the young preacher Timothy to be an example in a number of areas. He was told to be an example:

- 1) **In word**. This could refer to either his personal speech habits (gracious and wholesome) or to the doctrine he presented (that it must be truth). Either way, the instruction from scripture is that we should “speak the truth in love.” (Ephesians 4:15)
- 2) **In conduct**. Not only is our speech to be true and wholesome, our actions (manner of life) must match. There is probably nothing that destroys the influence of the cause of Christ more than hypocrisy.
- 3) **In love**. We should actively seek the best for others. Our love for others should mirror the love that God has for us – sacrificial, merciful, and gracious. By our love for our brethren, the world will know that we are disciples of Christ (John 13:34-35).
- 4) **In spirit**. We should be examples of zeal in our service to God and others. If others reflected my attitude of service to God, would the cause of Christ be bettered or worsened?
- 5) **In faith**. We are to exhibit strong assurance or confidence in God despite trials and setbacks. To have this confidence, we need to be diligent in our study of the scriptures and prayer to have the proper foundation for weathering life’s storms.
- 6) **In purity**. We need to be morally and sexually pure in the midst of a world that is neither. Our influence for good with brethren and the world alike can be destroyed by impurity in word or action. Remember that words and actions spring from the heart, so a pure mind is key!

Finally, observe that it was to a young person that this instruction was given. Understand that young people can provide powerful examples that brethren and the world can see. We should not look down on someone because of their youth, but rather encourage them to follow the example of this godly young man.

Tim