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1 TIMOTHY 1:1-2:15

We finished the book of **Proverbs** last week and we are back in the New Testament for this quarter...in **1** and **2 Timothy** and also in **Titus**. So, let's set a little background.

All three of the books we'll be looking at this quarter are **pastoral epistles**. They are letters the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus.

Both Timothy and Titus were very close to Paul. It is believed that he led both of them to the Lord Jesus and also that he mentored them and taught them and we're going to see in a few minutes that he considered them to be his "*sons in the faith*."

And both men were doing the work of a pastor.

1 Timothy is believed to have been written while Paul was in Macedonia and Timothy was at the church Paul had established in Ephesus. Apparently the church at Ephesus was experiencing some problems and that is why Paul left Timothy there to help deal with these problems.

The problem at Ephesus was the fact that false teachers had crept into the church, and Paul wrote this first letter to Timothy

- to refute this false teaching...
- to instruct Timothy and the church in truth...
- also to provide a "leadership manual" for the household of faith at Ephesus...

I believe it's interesting to note that all of Paul's epistles bear the name, not of Paul, but of the recipients of the letters.

- Peter's epistles bear the name of Peter.
- John's epistles are named for John.
- James' epistle is named for James.
- Jude's epistle is named for Jude.

But, not one book bears the name of Paul. We don't have 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 Paul...do we? No! We have **Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, Galatians, Ephesians**, and so on...

But, aren't we glad that Paul was such a prolific writer?

The Holy Spirit used Paul to write some of the most profound doctrine and some of the most precious words of encouragement and exhortation and warnings found in the Word of God!

Not only does **1 Timothy** refute false teaching, it is also a book about ministry. You and I may not think of ourselves as being "in the ministry"...but God has called all His children to minister to each other...

- to bear each others' burdens...
- to admonish and exhort and encourage each other...
- to teach each other and edify and pray for each other.

So, I want us to study these pastoral epistles expecting to learn how we can better serve the Lord as we minister in His name not only to each other but to other members of our church. I don't want you and me to think, "Well, this book isn't for me."

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"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

1 Timothy 1:1-2...

Paul identifies himself as he does in almost all his letters - *"an apostle"*...

An apostle was one whom God sent with a special commission as Paul said, **"according to the commandment of God."**

Why would Paul identify himself this way to someone who was so close to him? I believe there are two reasons...

- I don't believe Paul ever "got over" the fact that God had called him to be an apostle...
- Paul knew this letter would be read to the church at Ephesus...

This was the custom. When a letter was received, it was shared with the body of believers and many times it was even passed on beyond that local body. So, Paul wanted everyone in that body of believers to know that he was **"an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God"**... He wanted them to know by whose authority he wrote this letter!

Before we go on...let's look at a little background concerning Timothy...

Acts 16 tells us that Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. Timothy's mother, the Bible tells us, was a believer. Since it doesn't say that his father was, it is generally assumed that his father was either dead, or was not a believer.

We know from references by Paul that Timothy traveled with him frequently. In fact, Timothy was with Paul when he wrote many of his other letters. Timothy frequently served as Paul's trouble shooter or emissary... He went and checked on different churches that Paul was concerned about.

Timothy was thought to be about thirty years younger than Paul. And it will be obvious as we go along in these letters how much Paul loved Timothy.

Paul looked on Timothy as his son in the faith and his purpose in writing to Timothy was to undergird Timothy in the ministry...to instruct him regarding false teachers, and to exhort him to live a godly life....

Can you imagine having Paul as your mentor?

Verses 3-4...

Does this sound familiar? It's very important to the Lord that His children stay grounded in truth.

What were the false doctrines that had invaded the church at Ephesus? Well, Paul alludes to two in **verse 4**... *"myths"* and *"endless genealogies"*. What were the myths? Well, they were false gods and goddesses. The largest statue to Diana, the Greek goddess of the moon, was in Ephesus.

Diana was a myth! Jesus is the Savior! It's always been difficult for men to give up their "gods" for the one and only true God, hasn't it? Every person has "gods" that have crept into their lives.

It's much harder to know about the genealogies. It probably has to do with an emphasis placed on ancestry...the line that makes the Jews a peculiar race!

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Paul gives us the results of this kind of teaching...it gives rise **"to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith."**

All "religious teaching": falls into one of **two categories**:

- 1) Salvation based on Christ and Christ alone...
totally and completely apart from any of our
own human efforts...
- 2) Salvation based on human achievement, human effort,
good deeds, rituals or ceremonies...

Jesus said, **"You will come to Me and say, 'Didn't I do this and this and this in Your name?'"** And what did He say the answer will be? **"Depart from Me, I never knew you."**

And God takes very seriously those who teach false doctrine. To believe in false doctrine is not only wrong for the one who believes it, but it's also wrong in that the folks who believe it have a circle of influence...and their influence will lead others astray.

Jesus said that it would be better if a man had a millstone around his neck and be thrown into the ocean than to lead one of His children astray.

Never forget that you have a circle of influence. How does your influence affect others? Are they closer to heaven because of your influence? May God help us to have an impact on the lives of others for good and for the Gospel!

Verses 5-7...

In these verses we see a contrast...

-the instruction of Paul:

love from a pure heart

and a good conscience - fruitful and faithful

and a sincere faith...

-the instruction of false teachers

fruitless, faulty and faithless

Paul said these folks were teaching about something that they **themselves** didn't even understand.

These false teachers weren't concerned with truly learning the Law...or with knowing the God who gave the Law...or serving people in the spirit of the Law...and it seems the worst thing is that they were making confident assertions as if what they were teaching was absolute truth!

If you heard someone teach emphatically, confidently, dogmatically, as though what they were teaching were absolute truth, but they were instead false doctrine, **would you be able to recognize it?**

Do you know enough of the pure and true Word of God to spot a false teacher? I heard someone say, "Ignorance is not innocence, it is sin." And how true that is...especially in the day in which **we live!**

Ignorance of God's Word is sin! There are many many things in this world that we are ignorant of...but **none** of us should be ignorant of God's Word!

Verses 8-11...

Paul has put down these folks who were eager to be teachers of the Law...but Paul hastens to add that the Law is good when it is used lawfully.

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The Law is morally right and good...but the Law alone is **not** good news! WHY? Because **keeping the Law is an impossibility for us. The Law forces us to recognize the fact that without exception we are all guilty of violating God's standards.**

The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Jesus! The Law was not made for the righteous man. **WHY? Because there are no righteous men!** At one time or another we were all afflicted with one of the horrible sins listed in **verses 9 and 10. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."**

Because of Paul's emphasis on the Law, we can only assume that these false teachers were teaching strict adherence to the Law...and we know that Christians whether they be Jew or Gentile are under the **New Covenant**, not the **Old Covenant**.

False teachers teach, not according to the Spirit, but according to the flesh. The flesh **loves** religious legalism...because rules and regulations enable a person to appear holy without really having a change of heart!

Let me give you four ways you and I can discern a true teacher of the Word and a false teacher of the Word.

- 1) **Examine their understanding of Scripture.** Do they place any other book or books on the same level with the Word of God?
- 2) **Examine their goals.** do they seek to love, honor and glorify God?...or do they promote themselves?
- 3) **Examine their motives.** In all that they do, are they doing it out of a heart that loves Jesus?
- 4) **Examine the effects of their teaching.** Are their followers edified and built up and are their lives reflecting a pure and holy walk?

If you know God's Word, and if you'll hear all teachers and preachers with these four points in mind, I believe you will be able to stand firm.

But, I want to tell you...we must never let our guard down!

Remember this...Paul is talking about false teachers who want to lead and teach in the **church!** He's not talking about folks **outside** the church...we wouldn't have much of a problem with that, would we?

Verses 12-16...

I love this passage of Scripture. Let me ask you something...

If you had to select a candidate for the title **"The Worst Sinner Who Ever Lived"**...who would you choose? Judas? Jezebel? Hitler who killed 6 million people...or Stalin who killed 20 million? **Who would it be?**

Just think about this...

The man who wrote more books of Scripture than any other man...

The man who was probably the greatest church leader who ever lived...

The man who during his lifetime, without the aid of TV and radio, still carried the Gospel to the farthest reaches of the known world...

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This man, by his own **estimation**...in his own **mind**...deserved the title "World's Worst Sinner"...

Paul often focused on what he became in Christ Jesus... "an apostle; a bondsman", but he also never forgot the background, the lifestyle from which he came to Christ Jesus! And neither should we!

Paul was humbled by his salvation! Paul knew that he **deserved** God's punishment! But because of the blood of Jesus Christ, he had experienced God's grace!

Let's think for a minute about three aspects of salvation...Paul's salvation and ours as well...

The Fact of Salvation

verse 13b...

God saved Paul from his own wickedness, not because Paul had any good works to offer, but because the Lord exercised mercy toward one who had acted in unbelief.

Paul deserved justice and judgment, but God showed Paul grace and mercy. Thank God that the fact of salvation is that even though we deserve justice, God shows all who will come to Him by way of the Cross, mercies that are new every morning and grace that is more than sufficient and peace that surpasses all our understanding!

I don't know about you but the older I get the precious peace is to me!

EX: Ron Phillips and his bodyguards...Paul preached in the midst of persecution, but he didn't have bodyguards because he was 1) preaching the truth and 2) to Paul "to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Remember when He picked **your** feet up out of the miry clay and placed them on the solid rock of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Not only the fact of salvation, but also

The Basis of Salvation

How can God do this? On what basis does God withhold His judgment and justice and apply His grace and mercy and peace?

Verse 15...

Jesus didn't come into the world to heal folks of their lameness, and deafness and blindness...though He did this.

Jesus didn't come into the world to cast out demons...though He did cast out demons.

Jesus didn't come into the world to feed the multitudes and raise the dead...though He did these things.

Jesus didn't come into the world to be a great teacher, though it was said of Him, "No man ever spoke like Jesus spoke..."

Verse 15 tells us that **Christ came into the world to save sinners...**

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Aren't you glad the basis of our salvation is the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and not the keeping of rules and regulations and feast days and ceremonies?

How would we ever know when we had kept **enough** of the Law or been legalistic **enough** or done **enough** good works of kept **enough** rules and regulations?

The Purpose of Salvation

Verse 16...

And that's why He saved you and me. God didn't save us just to save us from hell, God saved us in order that others might see **through** our lives what God has done **in** our lives! ("example" - "pattern" KJV)

Are you allowing God to make your life a pattern? an example?

He did it in Paul...Paul's life was a living testimony of one who had presented his body a living and holy sacrifice...acceptable to God...and He can do it for us!

This is Paul's salvation testimony! When was the last time you shared your salvation testimony? Have you ever shared it? It's not hard...just do what Paul did...**tell what you were before Jesus came into your life and saved you...and then tell why Jesus has done for you...the difference He's made in your life...**

Everybody doesn't have a testimony like Paul's. Not one of us in this room has ever persecuted or imprisoned or caused the death of other believers.

Many of us were brought up in a Christian family. Many of us have walked with the Lord Jesus a lot closer and longer than others of us. But, we **all** have a testimony. All we need to do is tell it to others!

Our testimonies should always focus on the Lord Jesus...not on ourselves!

I pray that each one of us has a testimony to share. There is nothing you have ever done that is too big or too bad that God cannot forgive you!

Verse 17...Don't you just love Paul?

Paul gave his testimony and it's as though he could go no farther without praising God for it! And when we think about our testimony, we must praise Him, too!

By the way, if this verse sounds familiar, it is. We sing a hymn "**Immortal, Invisible**"...and it's taken from this verse...

*"Immortal, invisible, God only wise.
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes.
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days.
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise."*

Verses 18-20...

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In these verses, we see a contrast. As you study God's Word, be sure and look for **contrasts**...look for **comparisons**...look for **lists** and look for **frequently used** words.

God has called His children to an abundant life of love, peace, joy and fellowship with Him and with each other...however, there's another side to the Christian life...and it's this...

The Christian, just by virtue of the fact that he is a Christian, and has been called to live a holy life, will always be in a conflict...a warfare!

Our enemies, as we said a couple of weeks ago are
this evil world system...
our own sinful flesh...
Satan and his forces...

If anyone were to ask you, "Have you ever been in a war?" you might say, "Well, yes...I served in the military and I saw combat." Some of us would have to say, "No, I've never been in a war."

But, the truth is that we have and we either are right now, and we will be again.

Warfare...spiritual warfare...is descriptive of the battle that rages between the Christian and Satan. There are several areas of Satan's attacks that I'd like to note today...

Satan's original target was Jesus Christ. Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has sought to thwart the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We think sometimes of anti-semitism as something new, something that was most vividly and horribly played out in the Holocaust of the 1930's and 40's, but anti-semitism has been alive and well down through the ages.

Remember Pharaoh? Remember Haman? Remember Herod?

These men were used by Satan in an attempt to keep the Messiah from coming and crushing the head of Satan.

Well, all Satan's antics failed...and Jesus **did** come. so, then we saw that Satan tempted Jesus for 40n days in the wilderness and he failed there as well.

Jesus **did** go to the Cross.

Jesus **did** die for our sins.

Jesus was and is victorious over death, hell and the grave!

And after the victory of Jesus at Calvary, Satan turned his attention to the **chosen people of God**. Satan still attacks Israel. No other nation or group of people have come under so much attack from so many different directions than has Israel.

But, he also attacks **the church**...

Satan attempts to blind the eyes and close the minds of unbelievers to the Gospel...to keep them from becoming a part of the church.

Satan also attempts to harm **those who are already believers**. He wants to stop us in our service to the Lord. He wants to destroy our witness for Jesus. He wants to discourage us from saying anything for Jesus...

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Satan doesn't really attack unbelievers, he already has them... Satan's prime target is believers! He knows he can't have us, but he can surely thwart our walk with the Lord Jesus!

Satan also attacks the church through **the family**.

How many couples do you know...

How many families do you know...

that were once together, loving each other and supporting each other, but now are broken and bitter...all because Satan saw a weak spot and came marching in...

Satan attacks the church through her **leaders**...Leader after leader has been brought down by Satan's attack because they took their eyes off Jesus.

But, Satan also attacks the church through **false doctrine**...when the belief in the sufficiency of God's Word is weakened, then our **witness, our service, our influence, all are weakened as well**.

And Paul told Timothy in **verse 18** to fight the good fight. Timothy is called to do battle against the false teachers. And what Paul is calling Timothy to do, we are to do as well.

We must fight the good fight.

We must keep the faith.

We must keep a good conscience.

Verses 19b-20...

Here we see the **other side** of the contrast.

There were two men (**verse 20** really indicates that there were others, too)...Hymenaeus and Alexander who had rejected a good conscience and had suffered shipwreck in regard to the faith.

Verse 20...These men were blasphemers.

Were these men saved? I don't believe so. I find it hard to believe that someone who knows Jesus as his Savior could be a blasphemer. The apostle John said that some would go out **from** us because they are not **of** us.

In fact John said it this way, *"They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us."*

But, whether they were saved or not...they were apparently members of the church at Ephesus...and Paul says, "I have delivered these men over to Satan."

What does it mean to deliver someone over to Satan?

1) It could mean that these men were put out of the protective umbrella of the church body...no fellowship, no encouragement, no sweet koinonia.

2) It could mean that after counseling with these men and getting nowhere...that Paul simply took his hands off as God described in Romans 1. He simply gives them over to the one whom they are serving anyway!

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But, Paul does this, he says, ***"in the hope that they will learn a lesson...the lesson of 'not blaspheming.'"***

Remember what Paul said about the man who was sleeping with his father's wife in **1 Corinthians 5?**

"I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Paul told Timothy to keep a good conscience.

Paul said that Alexander and Hymenaeus had rejected a good conscience.

Conscience is a **good thing!** But, our conscience can become hardened. It can become seared. It's not totally reliable, is it? The more we reject a good conscience the less we're able to rely on our conscience.

We hear it said, "Let your conscience be your guide." Well, that's not real good advice unless you're "keeping a good conscience."

We're going to stop right here. Next week we're going to see Paul cover several subjects...beginning with prayer. And what Paul may be saying is "if prayer were more prevalent, maybe Alexander and Hymenaeus wouldn't have fallen as far as they have fallen...and maybe the church wouldn't have fallen for their false doctrine."