

1 Timothy

Summary

By this point in the history of the early Christian church, Paul was a seasoned apostle providing leadership for churches throughout the world. Timothy, his young co-worker, had been sent to minister to the vastly expanding church in Ephesus. While the letter to the Ephesians provides Paul's guiding words to the church as a whole, the books of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy are Paul's letters addressed specifically to the young pastor, Timothy. In this first letter to Timothy, Paul's primary focus falls on false teachers who had invaded the Ephesian church. Paul specifically addresses and corrects the message of the false teachers, while at the same time providing positive instruction to those who are holding true to what Paul, Timothy, and the other ministers of the true gospel have taught. Throughout the letter, Paul never wastes an opportunity to encourage Timothy with the message of the true gospel, knowing that the only way to battle the darkness is to strengthen the light.

Author

The first letter addressed to Timothy was written by the apostle Paul. The style is different from many of Paul's other letters, which may be attributed to the fact that Paul is writing to an individual rather than an entire church.

Date

The date given by most scholars for Paul's first letter to Timothy is A.D. 63-65.

Primary Characters

Paul (1 Timothy 1-6)

Timothy (1 Timothy 1-6)

Historical Moments

Paul Writes His First Letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 1-6)

Paul Sends Timothy to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1)

Major Theological Themes

There Is True Doctrine and False Teaching - In a world of subjectivity and relativism, the Bible teaches that some things are wrong and other things are right. Religious belief is not a matter of personal preference and individual choice. False and unbiblical teaching should be identified and rejected. True scriptural teaching should be praised and lifted up.

God Can Save and Use Anyone, No Matter How Sinful They Have Been - Paul holds himself up as an example of the "worst of sinners" as if to say to the world, "If God could save, cleanse, and use someone like me, He can use anyone!" The gospel of Jesus teaches us that Christ came into the world to save sinners. This theological truth should cause us to express deep gratitude for God's grace toward us. It should also move us to share this good news with a world full of people who are still prisoners in the chains of sin. Only Jesus can set us free.

The Gospel of Jesus Is Available to All Who Will Believe - God desires for all people to be saved and come to know His only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the ransom for all. Now we can receive or reject Him. The death and sacrifice of Jesus was not for a select group of people but is offered to all who will believe and receive this amazing gift.

Lessons Learned from 1 Timothy

Leadership in the Church Has Clear Standards, and They Are High - Not everyone who is part of a church is called to lead. God places specific standards for leaders. These standards are so high that no one fully meets them. The bar is set high so that leaders will continue to strive to be more like Jesus.

Members of God's Family Are Called to Care for Each Other - Through faith in Jesus, we become sons and daughters of God, making us brothers and sisters. When we realize that the church is not an organization, but a family, we are moved to care for each other. We are called to treat each other with compassion, tenderness, purity, and grace. In a world where everyone looks out for themselves, Christians look out for each other. We share, help, protect, and honor one another. The next time you walk into a worship service, look at the people around you as a family and ask, "God, how can I care for these brothers and sisters?"

Money and the Love of “Stuff” Can Trip Us Up and Damage Our Faith - The Bible does not teach that money is evil but teaches that the love of money is evil. There are some specific antidotes to this love of money. Learn to be content with what you have. Do not put your hope in wealth, but learn to share. And lay up treasures in heaven and not just here on the earth. As you read 1 Timothy, ask yourself, “Do I need to evaluate where I have placed my trust, heart, and treasures?”