

# The Good Servant of Christ – Part 3

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Paul instructs Timothy to demolish myths by focusing on the teaching of Scripture
2. aim – to cause us to seek ways by which we recognize myths that divert from the true gospel
3. passage – 1 Timothy 4:1-16

### b. outline

1. The Good Servant Sees (1 Timothy 4:1-5)
2. The Good Servant Trains (1 Timothy 4:6-10)
3. The Good Servant Teaches (1 Timothy 4:11-16)

### c. opening

1. the **expectations** of the pastorate
  - a. the beauty of **1 Tim. 4:6** = a confidence builder in dealing with *realities* (disappointments)
  - b. the beauty of **1 Tim. 4:11-16** = a confidence builder in dealing with *reservations* (expectations)
    1. there is an inherently *human* tendency to want to be “liked” or “appreciated”
    2. but, in the pastorate, this can be a *dangerous* tendency, given that preaching is fundamentally a task in which one exhorts the very people from whom you draw such appreciation
    3. being a pastor is often a “push-pull” kind of work – someone pushing you in one direction while someone else is pulling in the other, typically by people *who have never been a pastor*
      - a. **(again)** which helps validate the structure of leadership Paul advocates in **chap. 3**
    4. reservations = the natural tendency to wonder (constantly) if you are doing your job correctly, *and who (ultimately) gets to establish what your job really is and how you do it!!*
    5. **IOW: vv. 11-16** are a very strong message by the Apostle to Timothy about **what is expected of him** – not by the church *per se*, but by the very definition of the office established by Christ
2. the beginning of a **new chapter**
  - a. a chapter which gives a *concrete definition* of what the church *really is*:
    1. the “*pillar and buttress*” of the truth – the **repository** of the message of Jesus the Christ
    2. **Paul is convinced that the church is the divinely appointed institution to hold this truth out to the world, and anything that alters it is to be expunged from it**
  - b. a chapter which gives Timothy advice on what to do about this (as a “*good servant of Christ*”):
    1. he **begins** by pointing out the problem that Timothy *needs to see* (**vv. 1-5**)
      - a. the reality of **apostasy** amongst some in the church – those who “walk away” from the faith, either in outright denunciation or in a gradual decline from orthodoxy (**i.e.** a drifting away)
        1. through demonic teaching by perpetual liars imposing religious restrictions
      - b. **Timothy needs to face this reality in the church head-on; to sense the gravity of it**
    2. he **continues** by giving instructions on how Timothy is to *make this visible* (**vv. 6-10**)
      - a. by taking the risk to *warn* the church of these things, motivated by a strong sense of *truth*
      - b. by putting the church on a strict training regimen of pursuing godliness through *discipline*
      - c. by toiling with the church away from the temporal towards the *eternal hope* of God himself
      - d. **Timothy needs to turn this reality towards the church so she senses the gravity of it**
    3. he **finishes** by commanding Timothy to “ram this home” to *save the church* (**vv. 11-16**)
      - a. **note:** Paul gives a “rapid-fire” set of imperatives (commands) – **seven (7), 1 per verse + 1**
        1. ironically, the first (in the first word of **v. 11**) is a command to “*command*”
      - b. **each (sub)command is part of a single imperative that spans the entire paragraph**

## III. The Good Servant Teaches (1 Timothy 4:11-16)

### Content

#### a. the imperative to command the people (v. 11)

1. **(again)** “*these things*” = the truths that Paul has just put before Timothy (**vv. 1-10**):
  - a. there will be people who will depart, both from the faith and from the repository of the truth
  - b. there will be people who will teach what is false, distracting others from the true faith
  - c. there is a need for Timothy to be *transparent* about these realities before the church
  - d. there is a need for the church to engage in the pursuit of godliness as the antidote to apostasy

2. “*command and teach*” – Paul “ratchets up” the importance of what Timothy is to do:
    - a. not a *passive* form of teaching, but an **active form of instruction** that leads people to a greater understanding of the gospel and an application of that truth *to their lives*
    - b. **reminder: doctrine and theology spawns a love for truth and a deeper trust in Christ as that truth penetrates our hearts and minds (you cannot trust who you do not know!)**
      1. **doctrine does divide** – it divides those who truly love Christ *because they know who he is and what he’s done* from those *who haven’t got a clue or simply don’t care*
  3. **Paul insists that Timothy take this task seriously, taking up the mantle of true leadership**
- b. the imperative to earn their respect (v. 12)**
1. “*youth*” = young (as in age); lacking experience; being new to the role; being unimpressive
  2. “*despise*” = look down on; scorn; show contempt; disrespect; dismiss
    - a. **i.e.** because Timothy is young(er), and because he does not have the experience or credentials even of Paul, some in the church may dismiss him as *authoritative*
    - b. **question:** so, how does a (young) man gain such authority over others – even if established by an apostle, there will still be those who will “look down” on him because of his age or experience?
      1. he must **earn** that respect by “*setting an example*” for others – he must *demonstrate* his seriousness, which will cause others to accept his words (because they parallel his life)
  3. the five (5) areas of life that Timothy is (**or we all are**) to set an example:
    - a. in “*speech*” = set an example by the way that you speak, concentrating on that which matters
      1. contra flippant language, or discussion of matters that are unimportant or trivial or temporal
    - b. in “*conduct*” = set an example of your absolute trust in this Christ by the lifestyle choices you make
      1. contra the belief that you can live just like everyone else and still be a follower of Jesus
    - c. in “*love*” = set an example of love by prioritizing what others truly need, and providing it
      1. contra “love” which is based on sentimentality or the therapeutic only
    - d. in “*faith*” = set an example of faith by demonstrating trust in Christ in *every* circumstance
      1. contra the very modern sense of “self-reliance” and “self-esteem”
    - e. in “*purity*” = set an example of purity by resisting temptation and being quick to confess sin
      1. contra the idea that self-control and discipline belong only to the “super saint”
  4. **Paul knows that Timothy is young and inexperienced (thus the letter), but he believes God will grant him the respect of others *only if he is consistent in his life and his words***
- c. the imperative to prioritize the Scriptures (v. 13)**
1. “*devote*” = be alert for; consider carefully; hold firm to; continue to give oneself to; lit. be addicted to
    - a. **i.e.** have a **passion** for something so much that you are completely immersed in it – give it your energy, time, resources, focus, etc. – love it so much that it is almost a “part” of you
  2. (**in this case**) a passion for Scripture such that it is your primary tool of exhortation as a teacher
    - a. this is a way of describing an element of the **regulative principle of worship**:
      1. including the “*public reading*” of Scripture as a *central element* of worship (**e.g.** responsive reading, the direct reading of Scripture, the reading of Scripture as a part of preaching)
    - b. this is a way of describing **systematic expository preaching**:
      1. it is “*teaching*” – causing *learning* in the hearts and minds of the listener; not just *regurgitating* what they already know (or think they know), or what is popular or comfortable or entertaining
      2. it starts with “*Scripture*” – not “proof texting” to a predetermined idea, but the *exegesis* of truth as the text is unfolded before the people – God’s words communicated *directly from him*
      3. it creates “*exhortation*” – an *appeal to the heart* through the mind and an *encouragement* to do right with what is understood (**e.g.** repentance, faith, the pursuit of holiness, discipleship)
  3. **Paul wants Timothy to keep his focus on the Scriptures, for they are the primary means established by the Lord for all matters of faith and practice (*sola Scriptura*)**
- d. the imperative to use the gift as intended (v. 14)**
1. “*gift*” (*charisma*) = a special blessing from the Lord; an outworking of the grace of God; an ability granted by the Holy Spirit as a means of advancing the work of Christ in the church
    - a. sometimes used in the sense of the gift of *salvation itself*, but more often used as a spiritual ability
    - b. **e.g. 1 Cor. 12:28** – the various abilities of healing, helping, administrating, tongues, etc. – all designed for the advancement of the gospel and the edification of the saints to greater holiness
  2. (**here**) undoubtedly a reference to a **teaching ability**, specifically ordained in him by “*the elders*”
    - a. given by “*prophecy*” = something seen in him by others as coming from the Lord
      1. not necessarily a *predication of the future* (although that may be true), but a *proclamation* of something being true by virtue of revelation – **i.e.** the Spirit of God *compelled* the elders (**and Paul!!!**) to see something in Timothy, something *supernatural* that was a gift to the church
      2. note that preaching is often equated to prophecy in the N.T. – **a proclamation of revelation**

- b. since the entire pericope *screams* that Timothy is to preach and teach, the order of the previous imperatives (vv. 11-13) must lead to this conclusion: Timothy has a gift for *imparting knowledge* into the minds of others, *causing them* to trust and obey Christ in ever-increasing measure
- 3. “neglect” = disregard; ignore; lit. to be careless with either by misuse or lack of use
  - a. **possibility #1:** do not ignore, diminish, or fail to actually use this gift
    - 1. do not neglect your gift by failing to actually use it – do not substitute other means of engagement with the church to replace preaching, *thinking* it will be “more successful”
    - 2. **e.g.** the emergent usage of dance, journaling, meditation, story-telling, etc. over preaching
  - b. possibility #2: do not be careless by misusing this gift
    - 1. do not preach in ways that are *inconsistent* with a **high view of Scripture** – do not substitute other *forms* of preaching in the church, *thinking* it will be “more appreciated”
    - 2. **e.g.** heard someone say about a potential preacher: “he can’t be all bad if he’s funny”
- 4. **Paul knows that Timothy has been gifted by the Lord to accomplish a mighty work in the church, but only if he will remain loyal to the means given to him by the Spirit**
- 5. **question:** so, who’s setting the *expectations* – to whom does the teaching elder answer?
  - a. **Paul commands Timothy to be devoted to the preaching of Scripture, to earn the respect of the people by being consistent in word and deed, through exercising his gift of teaching**
  - b. **this is what it means to be a pastor, regardless of what anyone else has come to expect**