

1 Timothy 1:1-2

By
Pastor Nam Park

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“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Introduction

We come to the first letter of Timothy in the New Testament written by Paul to Timothy. Paul has written probably about two-thirds of the New Testament and all of them in the form of letters. He writes a letter to the Romans and what do we call that book of the Bible?—Well, *Romans*. He writes a book to the Ephesian churches and we call that *Ephesians*—and on and on it goes. There [are] a number of them, but there [are] a couple different categories of understanding his letters.

There are those [letters] that are written generally to the churches in a particular location. If it's to the Romans, it's to address certain issues and one of the issues in Rome (amongst the churches in Rome) was to make sure that they understood what the concept of salvation or justification by faith [is]. “What is that about?”—and so, he would write along the those lines, clarifying some issues, making them understand what the church was and why it was that we believe what we believe.

Well, there are those [kinds of letters] and there are these that we call the “pastoral epistles”. We call them “pastoral” because Paul writes to individuals, not necessarily to the Church. In other words, this isn't to the general churches in the area of Galatia. This is particularly a letter written to Timothy. We might think then that this is more of a personal letter, but it is not. It is written with the understanding that the church that Timothy is currently ministering at, will be hearing in on all the things that Paul is exhorting Timothy to do, to be, [and] to consider.

We call them “pastoral epistles” because First Timothy—or if we were in England, they would call it: *One Timothy* (if you guys have heard a good Scottish preacher that's how they'll refer to [the letters]; we call [them] 1st and 2nd Corinthians; they'll go *One Corinthians*...)—so, *One Timothy* is written with the idea that Paul is writing to Timothy. *Two Timothy* is written to Timothy again, a second letter. *Titus* is written to Titus. So, it's named after the individual [Paul] writes to. *Philemon* was really short, a pithy letter written to Philemon, a bond-servant, a fellow worker for the gospel.

So when Paul writes to Timothy, he is writing to him as the apostle Paul and we'll see in a second, as a spiritual father of Timothy and he's writing to him with a particular admonition in mind. Let me build for you, kind of the idea or the background, the context of which First Timothy comes to us. Today, we're really just going to be looking at the first two verses—the greeting; and I know you're thinking to yourself “*How exciting can the greeting be? 'Hi'...*” and then you just kind of go on. Well, there are some things that we do want to look at when it comes to those things, but let me build for you—kind of the chronology—the idea of what is happening with Paul at this point.

If you guys have been meeting with us before we did a short excursion [into] the life of David, we had just finished up the book of *Philippians* (the letter written by Paul to the Philippian church) and we said in that letter, Paul makes it very clear, that he is in Rome, in jail, in house arrest; and he is awaiting the verdict of whether or not he would be considered a rebel against Rome.

Remember that he had been chased out of the synagogues and a lot of the Jewish leaders (that opposed Paul and his new teaching) had basically chased him around and desired for him to be arrested; and then, they began to accuse him of being a troublemaker, a seditionist—meaning a rabble-rouser who is getting them all together getting everyone upset—and so, Rome ought to kill this guy.

So it had gotten to the point that [Paul had] appealed to Rome and he is in Rome awaiting a verdict when he's writing the Philippian letter. And in the Philippian letter, he says very clearly, he says, “I'm going to send to you, when I know the verdict, Timothy.” He's talking to the Philippians who are in the Macedonia area—he's way over here in Rome—and he's saying, “I'm going to send to you, Timothy, when everything's okay.” So he does that.

After Timothy [was] there and Paul [came] out, it [was] agreed upon that they [would] meet down in Ephesus (and they [met] in Ephesus) and Timothy and Paul—reunited after Paul [was] released from jail—[began] their ministry in Ephesus, which was a city that they had come to before (the churches had been established there already); and Paul and Timothy arrive and lo and behold, there [were] false teachings that [had] entered into the Church.

In fact, something curious in First Timothy is that the false teachings, unlike in a Colossae, did not come from outsiders trying to infiltrate the church. Here, the false teachings came from *within*. In fact, there [were] a number of leaders among them leading some of these [Ephesian believers] astray. So now, here was a very delicate, difficult situation—so Paul leaves Timothy here.

Paul continues on to Macedonia and heads back to the Philippians and all those guys up in that area. He leaves Timothy [in Ephesus] and as he leaves Timothy [there], he writes to him this letter to say, "Hey Timothy, I know situation that I've left you [in] and these are the things that that you need to concern yourself about."

Second Timothy is a lot more personal. It comes probably towards the end of Paul's life and he writes to Timothy and basically pours out, as a friend pours out to a friend. First Timothy is more about figuring out the administration of the church. It's about figuring out how we do church; why we do church the way that we do it and how to protect it from losing its value and its goodness.

So, as we look to this particular letter today, we hope more than anything to build for you something of the expectation, a desire, maybe even an anticipation of what is it that our Lord wants our churches to be like. We find those things in First Timothy or in One Timothy, if you want to call it that.

Let's pray and ask for the Lord to teach us as we look to these two verses that are the opening ideas in the letter to Timothy.

Heavenly Father, as we come before You, we thank You for Your goodness. We thank you for the good weather. We thank you that it's warming up and it reminds us that indeed we live in Southern California and we appreciate the goodness of the warmth.

Lord, at the same time we'd ask of you that you would encourage us to keep our attention and our minds fixed on the things of the Word of God today so that we might learn.

Lord, we thank you so much for men like Paul, for men like Timothy and for their ministry among us.

Oh Lord, help us not to just make celebrities of the great heroes of faith but instead to learn from them so that they would be our Paul so that they would be the instructors for us and that we might grow and we might learn and that we might demonstrate and present ourselves approved as workmen, who wouldn't be ashamed because we have accurately and rightly lived according to the Word of God.

So we thank You for this time and for this morning. We thank You for Your goodness in giving us just our lives and really the gospel of grace and ask that You would bless this time and encourage us with it.

*In Jesus Name we pray,
Amen.*

First Timothy (Purpose)

I think First Timothy is particularly of to us because there [are] a lot of parallels between us and First Timothy. The reason why I say that is because we, as a young church, are still kind of putting together the different components of what we think church ought to be [like], including the installment of leaders; the selection of elders (those kind of wonderful things). First Timothy is one of the first books you go to when you talk about spiritual leadership.

The whole idea of how to conduct the church is presented to us as Paul addresses these themes to this young pastor, Timothy—pastor of this church, or probably these different churches gathered together in Ephesus. What is the church supposed to be like? What are the leaders of the church supposed to be like? These [questions] are the practical concerns that First Timothy addresses. First Timothy has a particularly purpose—it's highlighted if you flip over a couple of chapters [to] 1 Timothy 3:14; verses 14 and 15, actually.

In [verses] 14 and 15 of chapter 3, it says, "*I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that...*" So there we have a kind of an informative-purpose clause that will tell us what Paul is after in writing to Timothy. "*...I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God...*"

In other words, the [Paul's] primary purpose [in] writing to Timothy is to say "Timothy, I'm writing these things to you because if there is some reason that the Lord delays me and I'm not able to come back to the rescue of the churches here in Ephesus, then at least you would know (by the hand of the apostle, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) how one ought to behave in the household of God." In other words, how should we set the tone, the mood, and the direction of the church of God or the household of God?

Look at the rest of that phrase in verse 15. It says "*... which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.*" [This is] very important. He uses architectural terms to say that we are basically the strength and support—"a pillar and buttress of truth." That's what the church does. The church proclaims truth. Whose truth? Well, it says, "*... the church of the living God.*"

Why is that important? Because guys, it is easy for us and for any religion to just get in the mold in which God is [more] of an idea, than an actual being. I mean, we can talk about God and say that God is this or God is that; we can talk about Him as if He were some kind of theory—so ethereal, so untouchable, and so impractical that He's not genuine or real to us.

But what does the Scripture say? What does Paul say? He says [to Timothy] "Timothy, you need to know how we ought to behave in the Church." Why? Because that is the household of the living God.

Our Scripture reading this morning [is] one of the many portions of Scripture where God and His Word describes false idols—and he says, "they have eyes, but they can't see; they have a mouth, but they can't speak." There's no breath in them. There's no life in them. Why would we fall down and worship things that are just ideas; things crafted by our imagination?

If you are sitting here this morning (and in your mind or in your heart) you know to some degree [that] God [can be] like an ethereal idea, distant. You ignore Him most of the time, but when you want to, you fashion Him the way that you want to and you catch yourself saying things like, "Well, the God that I believe in..." If you say that, you speak rightly in that *that* god you are talking about—that god you occasionally give attention to—he is the god that you have crafted, that you believe in, but we are called to believe in the true God, the living God and the living God of this Church.

We are the “pillar and buttress” of this Church. So what is Paul’s purpose in writing to Timothy? To establish how do you do—and not the order of worship kind of how do you do—but how do you administrate the beauty, the ministry, the light of being part of the body of Christ. What are the elements that a church needs according to God’s will and desire for us? That’s the emphasis of where this whole letter is going to go.

First Timothy 1:1, 2 (“The Greeting”)

Let’s take a look at the first two verses and we’ll take the greeting apart:

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Let’s just compare [this greeting, typical for epistles] to [the] letters we write today. We write each other, email all the time; and I get lots of email from you all the time (I don’t always respond and that’s my prerogative, so don’t get mad at me). [Because we] write to each other all the time, we understand [that] after a while, you don’t know how to start the email or how to address the greeting [to a letter]. I just start putting “Hey... H-E-Y... Hey” and then I just kind of go on to the things that I am trying to get to. Sometimes, I’ll put your name (maybe just your name), but the typical fashion of the long-winded letter is “Dear Mister or Miss so-in-so...” Then we end with “Truly yours, or sincerely, so-in-so.” That’s kind of the way we do it.

Well, when the Greeks wrote letters—and in the time of Paul when they wrote letters, you can call them epistles—they would write in the beginning (greeting) to whom it was addressed and from whom it was written; and for the most part, it would be a lot [simpler] than the way that Paul does it.

In fact, historically speaking the vast majority of the greetings to the letters would simply say, “To Timothy, my beloved son in faith from Paul.” It would literally say one or two phrases and what’s curious is in the letters of Paul, he sets it [up like] a formula. His greeting is particularly based on what it is that he will get to in that letter—what issues he would like to discuss. He kind of pushes some things into the greeting that is appropriate to the things that [he was] about to discuss.

And you think, “You mean he’s *that* particular about it?” Yeah, that’s what’s interesting about it. That’s how come we can talk about how the greeting is set up because in each of the greetings to the different letters, he uses a [slight] derivation of the things that he had said. Why? Because he is trying to put some emphasis on the way in which he would like us to understand the subject that is to unfold and what is necessary to us. That’s exactly what Paul is doing.

He says in his greeting, “**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God...**” We don’t have enough time to go through everything [about] Paul—hopefully you know who this Paul is. He was Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of the faith. On the road to Damascus, Saul had encountered Jesus, [Who] had blinded him and said, “Why are you persecuting Me, Saul?” Saul says, “Who are You?” And the Lord actually comes down and gets a hold of Saul of Tarsus.

He was a learned man. He was a Pharisee by trade. By being a Pharisee—that is something similar to saying that he had the Ph.D. of the day—he was incredibly learned, under Gamaliel, who was considered the greatest of the pharisaical teachers. And a lot of times when we say “Pharisee”, the first thing you think of is “religionist”, “hypocrite”, etc., but understand, to be called a Pharisee, to earn that title, meant that you had put so much work into understanding the Old Testament Scriptures that once they called you a Pharisee, you were considered one of the teachers of the Law.

That’s [why] when Paul [went] on his missionary journeys, any city he [went] to, the first place he [went to was] the synagogue, or to the marketplace, if there [were] no synagogue. [When] he [went] to the synagogue, the reason why he could go and he can stand in front of everybody on that Sabbath and just start talking about how, “Hey, didn’t Isaiah talk about the suffering servant? That suffering servant is Jesus Christ” was because his credentials [were] that he was a Pharisee.

He had spent at least two or three decades in the study of the Old Testament Law. He had become an expert—he had graduated in it. So because of that, he had a right to come and to teach out of the Old Testament in any synagogue anywhere on the earth. He was a well-credentialed individual.

But what was *he* like? We don’t really know. One 2nd century historian describes him this way, he says: “a man of small stature, with a bald head, crooked legs, and a good state of body with eyebrows meeting (unibrow), a nose somewhat hooked, full of friendliness, for now he appeared like a man and now he appeared like the face of an angel.”

So this is an unbelieving historian who is basically saying that Paul [had] nothing unique or special about his appearance. He’s a little bit bald-headed; [had] a beaked nose; he [had], you know, [a] uni-brow, but he [was] a friendly kind of guy. And at one moment he [looked] “like a man” (meaning that he [looked] very humble and normal) and the next moment he [looked] “like an angel.” What the historian [was] trying to describe [was] this idea that it seemed like there [was] something so special to him all of the sudden. And what was it that was so special about him? You might say it [was] his eloquence; his ability to speak. I’m not so sure.

In fact, in II Corinthians 10:10, Paul’s enemies were saying of him “*his letters are weighty and strong*” (meaning when he [wrote]) “*his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech is of no account.*” Well, if Paul was so eloquent, you wonder how was it that his enemies had been able to basically make fun of him and say, “Well, he *writes* bold, but let him come here in person. Let him speak. His speech is nothing. It’s cheesy. He’s yuck. He’s not that important.”

In Acts 17, Paul [presented on Mars Hill] the concept of the gospel—that Jesus Christ [had] died for our sins and He [had] risen [from the dead]—as [an] absolute affirmation of God’s design for salvation to come by Christ alone. What do some of the philosophers in Athens say? Some of them say, “Oh, that’s kind of interesting. We want to hear more.” But some of them say, “Who brought this seed-picker in here?” They use a term that [is translated] “seed picker”. It’s equivalent to saying “Who brought the country bumpkin with the greasy overalls... Who brought *that* guy in here? Who brought cuckoo-head into our midst?”

Paul speaks of himself in I Corinthians 2:1-5 (let me read that to you and take careful note of it when he talks about his own ministry). He says: “*And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.*” He says clearly that it wasn’t [by] some kind of intellectual, logical wisdom—that ability to convince you by argument or by

lofty speech, by eloquence. It wasn't eloquence and it wasn't by just excellent argument. "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Paul [said] "This is one thing that I wanted, for Jesus Christ and Him crucified, His death on the cross for you—I wanted that to be expressed to you."

"And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling," That doesn't sound like [some] superhero in his eloquence. He goes on to say, "...and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

One thing you can say for Paul—his mission statement and how he goes about the task of ministry wasn't [about] how well he spoke; [it] wasn't [about] how clean his line of argument was, although those things were there. He said, "You know, was there something special? I came to you (the Corinthian church) in weakness, in fear and trembling. My speech was weak. I didn't have that much to present. You guys thought it wasn't that interesting, but what came was the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power. And that's right."

What if your faith [was] based on my argument? How horrible would that be? What if your faith was based on how well a guy spoke about something? That's lame. That's empty. [Paul] says [that] genuine power is the power of the Word through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therein lies the power and the basis of faith, not [from] the wisdom of men, but [from] the power of God.

So there we have Paul in a nutshell. The man and the legend; the individual that we—I mean, I'm anxious to go to the Lord and first, I want to see the Lord and maybe after a few billion years, go talk to Paul; see how Paul is doing, just kind of pick his brain about some things. He was one of the great men of faith and we can look to him and enjoy him, but [Paul] himself would say, "Don't take such a big account of me. Take account of the power of the Word of God and the Spirit of God and the things that God does."

Paul says he's an apostle of Jesus Christ. He particularly says here that he's an apostle and we know that through the Scriptures this term **apostolos** (ἀπόστολος) comes from **apostello** (ἀποστέλλω), which means "to send out". It means that he is "one of those that are sent out." In fact, sometimes the concept of this is simply "a messenger." [For instance, if] a king [had] a very important decree to send, he would send out **apostello**, an **apostolos**, "a sent out one, a messenger."

We know the twelve original disciples, minus the treacherous one, the "son of perdition," (Judas [who] was replaced) became the "sent out ones" —no longer disciples, but now sent out to take the message of Jesus Christ to the world. Paul was one of those, numbered among them. He was an apostle, particularly to the Gentiles. He took the gospel to all of these Gentiles.

I think it's interesting because in many of the other letters that Paul [wrote], his greetings usually say, "I, Paul" not "apostle of Jesus Christ." He usually says something to the effect of "bondservant" or "a slave of Christ Jesus." He emphasizes his position in the things of Christ. So if he here emphasizes his apostleship, that he is numbered amongst one of these very uniquely qualified men, the question you ask yourself is why? There's a particular purpose.

Paul is saying that there is authority vested in the office of [an] apostle. In fact, there was power vested in the office of the apostle. The apostle is capable of amazing things. If we read through the book of Acts, we see that God through the apostles and the laying on of hands could raise people from the dead. You guys remember the story of Eutychus (Acts 20:9) he was sitting in the [window sill], listening to Paul on a hot day like today, and he [was] falling asleep, like most of you guys will do in a few minutes, and he falls. The guy falls asleep; falls out the second story window and the kid falls down to his death. Paul goes outside and prays for [him] and he comes to life; a cool kind of story and things like that would happen.

Demon-possessed individuals like [the] girl who was a diviner (Acts 16:16-19) and demons [themselves], when they encountered Jesus or when they encountered the apostles, what do they do? [Did] they go, "Come on, I want to fight you Paul!" No. They just fall in line. She's demon-possessed and she falls in line. She goes, "These men are preaching about the greatness of God and his salvation, these men..." and she's following them around, proclaiming the truth of what these guys are. But [she] bothers Paul. Why? Because, she's demon-possessed. So he turns around and goes, "You know, stop." And the demon is gone and then [her owners] get mad and they want to sue Paul. But it's an interesting kind of thing to understand that the [apostles held] great privilege and responsibility and authority.

So if Paul instead of saying, "I, Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, write to you churches," says instead "I, Paul, write to you, Timothy, and I am an apostle of Christ Jesus", he is emphasizing his authority because this letter [was] written not just personally to Timothy, but written to Timothy [with the intent] to be read in the congregation of the Ephesian church. They are supposed to hear that [opening statement and] it would [have been] as unique as if I said "To Gary my friend, from Nam who is the pastor of this church and who guards the truth and is concerned about error." If you read all that, you [would] think, "Alright, I don't know what the rest of the letter says yet, but I have a feeling that he's got something to say. You know something's not right here."

And in that same way, Paul says "I am **'an apostle of Christ Jesus.'**" Not only does he say that, but he says, "**by command of God.**" So obviously, he's doubly emphasizing the concept of authority. He has the office of an apostle of Christ Jesus and he has that office by command of God. The word for "command" here, **epitagē** (ἐπιταγή), is this idea that you use for a royal command or mandate. This term is unique and kind of unused for the most part; he uses [it] primarily in the pastoral epistles. [It signified] that he [was] given authority by command of God. What he [meant] by it is [that] God the King [had] issued a mandate and that mandate [said] "Paul, you are My apostle and I want you to do these things for the church."

He's emphasizing his authority particularly because Timothy is dealing with a number of issues in the church, one of which was false teaching. But unlike the other churches like we were talking about, these [were] false teachers [that were] among them and that came up through them. These [false teachers were] probably some guys that [were] considered elders of the church that [had] gone astray. And that's probably why Paul, when [he] addresses Timothy in this letter, [would] get to the idea of what it [meant] to be an

elder—what kind of man, the qualifications (meaning the character qualifications), what kind of things the guy does, what [was] he like? Who is he before God? I mean those things matter. Later, he'll even talk about to Timothy and he'll say [when] you reprove an elder, do that gently like you do to a father. Why would he have to emphasize these things, unless that's where some of the spiritual issues were?

For a situation like [this], where Timothy [shows] up trying to establish things and to re-establish the right way of doing church, Paul is trying to give him, or bolster him with some sense of authority and divine commission. He's saying "By the very command of God, I'm an apostle, not by my choice, not by my initiating, not because I really wanted to, [but] by very direct command of God." There's full authority there and he wants to give that authority, vest that authority, towards the help of Timothy.

He says, "**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope**" and he always seems to include something of the nature of salvation as well as that idea of just that encouragement of knowing who God is. He says God is our Savior, and that's a great Old Testament concept. You'll find it sprinkled in all the Psalms, Micah 7:7, [and] Habakkuk 3:18, where it talks about God being our Savior.

If you run across individuals who don't know better, they start to think that the Old Testament is about this mean, vindictive, "I'm going to crush everybody"-kind of God; and [that in] the New Testament, God (Jesus Christ) is all about love and "I would never hurt anybody"-kind of fluffy [God]. Both of [these ideas] are wrong. [They are] the one and the same God.

God is the Savior. Jesus Christ is our Savior, but God the Father [had] been our Savior from the beginning. From all the revelation of Scripture, he has been the Savior. It means that He is the Deliverer and this term, "God, my Savior or God our Savior" is used particularly in the Old Testament to highlight the idea of redemption. It's frequently used in the context of the God who delivered His people out of Egypt. He's a rescuer. He's a Savior. Paul is trying to encourage Timothy to say, "Think of who our God is, He is a great Savior" because he's about to tell Timothy, "Don't lose heart. Don't let them intimidate you. Don't let them look down on your youthfulness, Timothy. You hang in there."

And so he's reminding him of what is the greatest thing of all—and it is our God. He is our Savior and Jesus Christ who is our hope. The word "**hope**", *elpis* (ἐλπίς), is particularly well-used, in a Christian sense. I think it was Donald Guthrie, he says this, "*The word 'hope' used in a Christian sense, conveys an element of absolute certainty; an element usually lacking in the modern usage of the word.*"

Do you understand what he is saying there? When we talk about hope, we mean it in an almost frivolous, it-may-or-may-not-happen-but-it-would-be-great-if-it-did kind of thing. We hope to have a certain thing, to drive a certain car, to own a certain something; that's what our hope is. We mean it as almost a spurious kind of maybe-maybe not, but if it did that would be great. How [do] the Scriptures talk about the concept of hope? The Christian concept of hope in the Scriptures is different.

For instance, in [Romans 5:3-5](#), it says this: "*More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope...*" Okay, that's interesting that hope is built on character and it's built on suffering and endurance. But look at what the rest of that section says in verse 5: "*and hope does not put us to shame...*" Another way of translating that [verse] would be that "hope does not disappoint us in a shameful way." It doesn't leave us out there.

The best way I could illustrate this is if you were supposed to meet someone for a date, and they stood you up. You're sitting there at the restaurant, all by yourself; waiter keeps coming by to ask if you want to order yet. And you kind of go through that embarrassment of "you just got left out there"—that has never happened to me guys; I'm not speaking from personal experience. I just got to throw that in there in case some of you [thought that]. The idea is that hope doesn't put us in that situation of embarrassment and shame or abandons us. That's exactly the idea there. So see, it's not spurious. It's not "Oh, I hope so. I hope God will come and save us." Christian hope is a lot more certain than the concept [of hope] that we throw around today. "... *because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*" As certain as God's love has been poured into us, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Himself, as certain as that is, and Scripture is certain about it, our hope can't fail us. We're not going to get stood up [by God's hope].

[Colossians 1:3-5](#) says something of a similar nature. It's in the prayer of Paul where he says, "[I] thank God... we pray for you [all], since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints... because of the hope laid up for you in heaven." Now, what is usually laid up for us in Heaven? The terminology [Paul uses] is treasure or inheritance. If it's something laid up for us in Heaven, we usually think some kind of wonderful, excellent thing—a prize or possession; a treasure or inheritance that is there when we get there. Is that spurious? Is that like it might or might not happen? Of course not, if you guys know that you are going to get an inheritance, you kind of know what that is or the dimensions at least to some degree. Why? Because it's your parents.

In that same way, when Paul says to the Colossian church "the hope laid up in Heaven", he's not saying, "I hope you guys will be there. It would be nice if you guys could make it." He's saying that hope has some dimensions to it. Salvation to be revealed will be revealed to you when you're in heaven. The fullness of the dynamics of being right in the Lord for all of eternity will be there.

Hope has some certainty to it and with this certainty; Paul is trying to encourage this young pastor, Timothy. He's saying, "You know, Timothy, this is me. I'm an apostle of Christ Jesus, the authority given by command of God, who is our Savior and Jesus Christ, who is our hope." These are certainties that he can rest on, especially for difficult tasks.

Preaching is a difficult task, [but it] is nothing compared to shepherding—the shepherding ministry. I know a lot of you guys, when you do public speaking, would be in a cold-sweat and a panic. Do I get nervous? Sure. In the flesh, I would think, "Wow, should I address all these people?" And you may get that way until you get to the task of explaining what the Scriptures are. But preaching—its involvement, its preparation, its presentation, the whole exercise of it—is a difficult task, but nothing compared to actual shepherding in regards to [dealing with] sin.

When you sit across from somebody that you know, that you care about, that is your friend, and you're discussing issues of sin and you say, "Listen, I don't know how to tell you this, but you're a *sinner!*" You can't just go off like that. It is a difficult task. In the end, it's not about you just wailing on them, it's about you desiring so much for them to be right in the Lord. That is a difficult [task] and

that's what Timothy [faced]. He's going to be staring down elders. He's going to be talking to these guys that are respected as leaders of the church and he's going to address some very serious issues of sin and wrong theology.

And he's a young guy; Paul is saying, "Hey, find this encouragement in God, our Savior, the One that delivers from sin, and the One that is our hope. And I grant [to] you my authority, so that the church at Ephesus would understand that you indeed are the one sovereignly selected by God for this purpose." So he gives that greeting and in verse 2, he talks about the blessings of this individual Timothy.

He says, "**to Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**" Paul blesses him with these few words, "**Grace, mercy, and peace from God...**" He encourages Timothy along these lines. The blessings that Paul wants to pour out in just that short greeting, includes this idea that he is a child of faith, his child of faith, and that God [would grant] him His grace, mercy, and peace for everything that is needful to be done.

Let's take a look at Timothy and realize that this [was] a man who was fraught with weakness and imperfections. He was born into a mixed marriage, a Jewish mother and a Gentile father. That to us means absolutely nothing and really it's not a big deal in the Scriptures, except for the fact that it meant that he was on the outside. Because he was from a mixed marriage, he naturally was considered not a Jew and that's probably the reason why when Paul picks him up to join in the retinue of his missionary team, he's not circumcised.

Remember [Paul's] biographical background in Philippians 2, he said, "Listen, I'm a Hebrew of Hebrews, I was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the Law..." in honor of the Abrahamic covenant. The fact that that hadn't happened to Timothy tells us that he was outside [the] Jewish community. His mother and grandmother were apparently devout and they loved the things of the Lord, and they were early converts to Jesus Christ, but even though they had raised him up in the Old Testament [traditions], there was some kind of tension that pushed him outside and it was because he had a non-Jewish, Gentile father.

He was from the town of Lystra and most likely converted as a young boy in Paul's first missionary journey in that area. There was a time in Lystra when Paul was almost stoned to death (Acts 14:19). And so for a young guy to hear the gospel and then see the guy that came to preach in town dragged outside the city and almost stoned to death, it must have been quite impressionable.

Paul was delighted with young Timothy joining his missionary team, especially in replacement of John Mark, who had abandoned them at some point. Timothy was well-gifted. In fact, the elders had laid on hands, and later we'll see that in 1 Timothy 1:18 that he was charged with a proper giftedness to the task of the ministry that was appointed to him. He was greatly trusted by Paul. Look at some of the language that Paul uses concerning Timothy. He said that he would send Timothy (from his jail in Rome) to the Philippians [and] in [Philippians 2:19-22](#). It says, "*I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. They all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.*"

Paul commends Timothy consistently throughout all of his writings. Whenever he mentions him, [he does so] as someone like his son, someone he trusts, someone excellent. There is something to be said for the concept of the discipling relationship between Timothy and Paul. There is something excellent about knowing someone that you go to and delight in and is a spiritual older brother to you.

On the flipside, [when] you have someone that you have invested some amount of energy to, that is your spiritual younger brother or sister, there's something beautiful and excellent about that. That is part of the relationship that is built into the fabric of what it means to be a church, [that is] older men discipling younger men; older women discipling younger women.

Understand that even when I use the term "discipleship," all of the sudden; we would start pouring out this whole cultural baggage of what we mean by that. A lot of you guys may come from a background where that means you have *one* person that you are allowed to meet with and that you meet every week—you go through a certain book and for the rest of your life as long as they're alive—that is your one discipleship relationship. Can I say that that's weird? That's bizarre. If you cling to that too tightly and rigidly, that can be legalistic.

What discipleship ought to be is that for at least a period of time you invest yourself into somebody. We don't know, Paul doesn't say that "I took Timothy under my wings. I made him do everything I did." Do we know that he probably did those things? Yeah, we probably know from inference, but not from direct command or clear Scripture in text. What can discipleship be? I think it's anything that allows an older person (mature in some things) to invest into a younger person (immature in some things) for some season of time until they are mature. There you have it.

Does that mean you have to be discipled by just one person all your whole life? Of course not. And you shouldn't be because unless that person is Jesus Christ, they've got some issues, too. We're not trying to clone anybody. We're just trying to establish a sense in which we build each other up. [It doesn't] have to be so formal, so rigidly established, etc. It's just about the teaching ministry; about us growing [together] in faithfulness. And that's what Timothy was to Paul. He was his disciple certainly, but he was [also] his long, lifetime friend.

Timothy was a young man. We know that. Even in Chapter 4, verse 12, there's a particular command that Paul gives him: "*Let no one despise you for your youth...*" or youthfulness. Why would [he say] that? Because he's got the difficult task of trying to purge sin out of the leadership [in] the church.

In [1 Timothy 2:22](#), Paul [also] says specifically, "Flee youthful lusts." Why? Because he's a young man. He's a very young man. In fact, I think it was John Stott [that] suggested that Timothy, at this time in Ephesus, might be in his mid-thirties. That's me. I'm in my mid-thirties. Okay, a little over my mid-thirties now, but that's us. And he's speaking to a church that needs to formulate the right basis of its leadership and its authority and its structure. [The things that are written by Paul to Timothy also befit us]. Timothy was young and that would work against him if he weren't careful.

Just as if I allow myself the pride of thinking I know what I am doing at every step of the way that would be a detriment and a disservice to you. I guarantee it. Why? Because how long have I been in the faith that I actually know everything? That's stupid. How much have I studied? How much *can* I study that I actually would know everything—that I would have an answer to everything? Never.

So it's appropriate for us to take as an issue of weakness [our] youthfulness. It is good and humbling for us to think that if I am young that, in of itself, could be a major issue. We ought to think in those terms. We ought to be careful and tread lightly and be careful. At the same time, we ought not to be timid.

Paul also writes in II Timothy 1:7, that "God gave us a spirit [of timidity] but of power and love and self-control." Apparently, one of the issues concerning Timothy was there was this timidity. It is not to say that he was always cowering and he's always scared, but that in his boldness and the things that he did, he was like I would be; going and trying to proclaim the things of the Lord, and at some times feeling overwhelmed and sometimes just kind of feeling like "this is too much."

In I Corinthians 16:10, Paul says "When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am." Why does he say that? Because of all the churches, the Corinthian church was the most problematic. These guys were troublemakers. These are the guys in 2 Corinthians that were saying, "Have you seen Paul? Have you heard Paul? Why are you guys so into Paul?" This is the same church that in First Corinthians in the early part [of the letter] says, "You know what? I'm not of Paul. I'm of Apollos! I'm not of Apollos, I'm of Barnabas! Oh yeah, I'm of Jesus Christ!" And they were just making factions and making political groups. These were individuals that comprised the church that is similar to many of the churches that exist today. I mean, I think the modern church is more like the Corinthian church than anything else. Sexual immorality is an issue; guys doing sin is an issue; guys claiming themselves [to be] leaders (why?) because they think they are smart is an issue. I mean pride, all of that stuff pours in.

Paul says, "When Timothy comes..." make sure you take care of him, man. Go light on this guy. Make sure he's at ease. Don't be rough on him. He's doing the work of the Lord like I am." And so again, you see Paul protecting him, why because there is an element—is he bold? Certainly is he trustworthy? Paul left him for himself to fend for himself and to fend for the things of God here in Ephesus. Was he trustworthy? Absolutely. Was he strong? Was he knowledgeable in the Scriptures? Yes and yes. At the same time, was there a part of him in his youthfulness that he would succumb to timidity and to fear? Absolutely. Not only that, but physically, he had a weak constitution.

In I Timothy 5:23, Paul is going to say, "Hey Timothy, no longer drink water only." It's not a command for all of us. "Now, don't drink water only, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your ailments." Timothy had some health issues and the idea of putting a little bit of wine in the water [was maybe] to settle his stomach. I don't know, maybe he had some ulcers. I have no idea, but he [had] some weakness as far as [his] constitution. He was a young guy. He was given to flights of youthfulness. He was given over to timidity [at times]. And he had a weak constitution. Timothy was *not* the perfect missionary.

If we went through the whole missionary process and we looked at this guy and [asked him], "How's your constitution if you want to go into the Gentile world? They eat some crazy stuff. Are you ready for that?" Timothy would go, "Well no, my stomach bothers me a lot and I'm frail and fragile a little bit." "Oh, really? Well, can you be bold because there [are] a lot of false teachers cropping up? There's a lot. Can you be strong in the midst of all of them?" And he might say, "Yeah, I think so. I'm not that sure." "Well, Timothy how old are you? I mean do you even shave?" "Well I'm a young guy. I'm in my thirties and I don't have that much going on."

I like what R. Kent Hughes says about Timothy. "He is not the perfect missionary and you know what, he is so un-Paul." Do you appreciate that? I do. Because what that tells you is that even in discipling relationships, [we are] not to become similar to the individual that disciples you. What [we are] to become, is similar in the strength of faith and the concept of the things of the grace of God, but [to keep our] personality and giftedness.

Timothy [was] not Paul. Very un-Paul-esque, un-Paul-like. He [was] not like Paul [who was] the teacher of teachers. [Paul would] go and [say to his detractors], "You guys are saying that I am bold in letters, but don't worry, I'm coming and I'm going to come in the flesh and we will talk... and we will see where the power [of God] rests." So Paul is bold to the point that he'll just say all that stuff, "Wait till I show up!" Here's this bald guy, uni-brow, beaked nose, looks kind of small, crooked [legged man saying], "Wait till I show up." This is Yoda! Yoda is saying that he's going to show up and there ought to be the fear of the Lord upon them [when he comes]. Paul is interesting and excellent and wonderful. Timothy is not Paul. I love that. I think that that's important and it's something for us to appreciate.

[Timothy] was not the stuff of the great missionaries, but indeed he was well used of God. [That] makes him all the more endearing to us. I like what Oswald Chambers said. "God can achieve His purpose, either through the absence of human power and resources or the abandonment of the reliance on them. All through history God has chosen to use nobodies because their unusual dependence on Him made possible the unique display of power and grace. He chose and used somebodies only when they renounced their dependence on their natural abilities and resources."

First Corinthians 1 is just about that. God uses the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. The pride of human beings, they are so convinced that they are excellent. And who does God use? People like us. We don't know that much. We aren't that sure about everything. We're not that strong. But that's why because God wants to show that it's a display of his power and glory, not the ability of individuals, not the intelligence of individuals, not whatever they can accomplish in their human might. And it's to encourage Timothy along those lines.

[Paul continues with] "...**Timothy, my true child in the faith**" And he uses this term "true" [which is] an interesting one. He doesn't use the term that is the opposite of error. He doesn't say he is the true child of faith versus the false child of faith, like Hymenaeus and some of these guys he's going to name later on in the letter who [had] shipwrecked their faith. He uses a term that means "genuine". In fact, in the Greek literature, it was a term used to validate the legal identification of a legitimate son in court documents. Timothy had a Gentile father, remember? And so in a sense, the Jewish community [did not consider Timothy] a legitimate Jew.

When Paul says, "here is my true or genuine or legitimate son of faith," [who] I love as a younger brother or son because he grew up next to me [and] shared the burden of ministry with me. Not only is he my son of faith, but he is my legitimate son. And in a back-handed way, [Paul was] saying [that though Timothy] was rejected growing up [in] the Jewish community (because they considered him illegitimate), but [Paul considered] him legitimate and [his] true son in faith. He's saying not only is Timothy a *man* of faith—and a man of faith similar to the kind of faith Paul has—but he's saying that he's a legitimate *son* of faith.

"Don't let anybody speak against Timothy, this man who is my son in faith"—a wonderful commendation from Paul and one of the great things that the apostle says of Timothy. It's his affectionate stamp of approval and it's meant for the Ephesian church before

they get all upset and they go, "Who is this young guy? Why did Paul leave us his junior?" And he's saying "Are you kidding me? This is not just my son in faith, this guy's legitimate. He grew up with faithful teaching and understanding the Word of God and the Old Testament. He would have been a Jew of Jews, if he could have been like I was, but you consider him illegitimate, but I can't consider him that way. He's legitimate in every way."

He commends him in [1 Corinthians 4:17](#) this way: "*That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.*" Paul says, "Timothy is such a son in faith to me, if I send him to you, it's like sending myself to you. He knows my ways. He knows the things that I teach. He knows what I believe and he is consistent in faith and conduct as I am."

[Philippians 2:22](#) talks about that: "*But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.*" He says to that Timothy, my legitimate child in faith, I write.

And he gives this opening blessing: "... **Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

"Grace." We know what that is. It is what we might call a "gift." To grace somebody is to give them something that they can't earn. We talk about salvation—and this is always an important issue—what makes our doctrine or our understanding on how to be saved or go to heaven or to be rescued or to have purpose; what makes it unique from all the other world religions? What makes it different from going to Nirvana—or to go to Purgatory for a period of time and then to go somewhere else for a period of time? What makes it different from the Mormons or the Jehovah Witnesses? It is the concept of Grace.

We are saved by grace alone, and the whole idea that if you add anything to that, it is not grace anymore. Can you imagine if it's your birthday and I give you this excellent gift and you unwrap the beautiful wrapping paper and you look inside and it's a diamond-encrusted watch? And your like "Wow, this is beautiful. You're just giving that to me?" and I go "Absolutely." And you go, "Man that's so gracious of you." "I know. Oh, by the way, you owe me \$15,000." If he owes me anything, it's not a gift. What if I go, "Hey you owe me \$5.00 for the shipping." That's still not a gift. If you require a penny, it cannot be considered a legitimate gift; if you require full payment, it's not a legitimate gift. The grace that we have from God is that He pours into us what we can't even begin to earn.

And if any of you are sitting there and thinking to yourself, "Yeah, I want to have a right relationship with the Lord. So I'm going to work on it and then I will go to the Cross and bow my knee and I will worship the Lord and depend on Him from then on." You're nuts because that is not grace. You cannot do enough to be savable.

We might agree with that because we know that's what the Scriptures say, but there is something in us, in our sinful nature that is so legalistic that we [feel we] have to do something [to gain salvation]. "I mean, come on I have to prepare my heart somehow." You can't prepare it. There's nothing you can do except plead on the mercy seat of Jesus Christ and ask Him for forgiveness of sins. That's it. That's what grace does to us. It requires absolute and abject [humility]. You can't serve, you can't earn, you can't do anything and so therefore, you depend on God alone.

Therefore, he says [in a kind of benediction], "Grace upon you, Timothy." Why? It's to remind Timothy that it's not in his power, in his intellect, in his ability of argument that these things can be accomplished. The setting right of the church can only be accomplished by the same power that saves us, by the same power that sanctifies us. Grace alone for salvation. Grace alone for the task of the ministry ahead.

He also says, "**mercy.**" And mercy particularly is tied to that Old Testament Hebrew word, *hesedh* (חסד). I think one scholar said that if you don't accidentally spit on the person in front of you, you're not saying that word right. The idea of *hesedh* is loving-kindness. It is mercy, or something that you pour out, is for a particular help. So when he says "Grace to you," he says depend on God's grace alone. When he says "mercy," he is saying "Make sure that you know that God is the kind of God that has mercy on the helpless. He aids those that need it. May God grant you mercy in time of need" and Timothy would need God's mercy because he is timid, because he's weak, and because he's young.

And he says "**peace**" [which is] associated with the Hebrew word, *shalom* (שלום), [which means] tranquility of heart and well-being. It's not just ceasing from fighting, he's encouraging Timothy to be at peace. Why is he doing that? He says "Timothy, you need God's grace; you need God's mercy for help and you need God's peace. Why? Because it's going to get rough. It's going to get rough and you need to be strong in the peace of God for strength and encouragement so that you can continue. May God grant you peace in all your challenges."

Conclusion

So in the opening dialogue [of] this greeting—you know usually this is the part that you if you're reading through First Timothy where you kind of zoom ahead quickly with your eyes—there is [some of] the notions that Paul (of some of the things that Paul) is going to address.

Paul is saying "This is my legitimate child in faith and I love you dearly and I would pray that God will grant you the grace, mercy, and peace, so that you might accomplish the things which are, to set in order, for the sake of the glory of God—the true display of His glory in His church to do things right in accordance to His Word and will." To do that takes some amount of courage and takes [some] amount of energy and the only way to do it is in God's grace, mercy, and peace.

It's a perfectly fitting letter for us. We are that young church establishing leadership, making things fit together. I am that young pastor trying to encourage and build you guys up, not always certain that I am always doing the right thing, the right way, but we grow up together in the things of the Lord. And I think First Timothy, this letter particularly, is very practical in teaching us and guiding us along that process. So let's commit our way to Him. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we thank You, again just for Your goodness and grace to us, as we think about the virtue of Your Word, how You admonish us in the Scriptures, we thank You that its not just by way of demand, but You do indeed give us Your grace, Your mercy, and Your peace that we might walk in Your ways.

We thank You, Lord, that we might trust in You; that the work that is to be accomplished in the end is supernatural and we don't have the power to do it in ourselves. We thank You for that because we know that the end result is Yours to give.

We trust You, Lord, for all things pertaining to our church and our ministry, just as we will learn in the weeks to come about Timothy and his situation and things that Your Scriptures and Your Holy Spirit desires for him; may we learn those same lessons to present our church to Your glory to the excellence of the admonition of Your grace.

We give You praise. We thank You and ask for You to bless this time and this church according to Your good purpose for us.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.