

# The Charge to Timothy – Part 1

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Paul's greeting and charge to Timothy: confront those who teach false doctrine in the church
2. aim – to cause us to understand the importance of sound doctrine as central to godliness
3. passage – 1 Timothy 1:1-20

### b. outline

1. The Greeting into the Charge (1 Timothy 1:1-2)
2. The Substance of the Charge (1 Timothy 1:3-11)
3. The Basis of the Charge (1 Timothy 1:12-20)

### c. opening

1. the **indicative-imperative** structure of the letter
  - a. **IMO**: difficult to see as clearly as **e.g.** Romans, but there nonetheless
  - b. Paul begins this letter with an indicative statement (**i.e.** a fundamental truth; **chap. 1**), which he then *implements* as a series of imperatives (**i.e.** as instructions to Timothy; **chaps. 2-6**)
  - c. but, *as is consistent with all of Paul's letters*, he begins with a **greeting**
    1. **note**: we will only *briefly* examine this, due to its similarity to the greeting in Ephesians

## I. The Greeting into the Charge (1 Timothy 1:1-2)

### Content

#### a. Paul, the *man*

1. like *all* of his letters, Paul begins by identifying himself *directly by name*
  - a. he uses his *Roman* name (Hebrew: Saul), starting from Cyprus on his 1<sup>st</sup> Journey (**Acts 13:9**)
    1. symbolizing his *radical conversion*: no longer a servant of *Judaism*, but a servant of *Christ*
    2. specifically, a servant *to the Gentiles* (**Acts 9:15**)
2. Paul identifies himself *by name* in order to establish:
  - a. a *personal* connection to Timothy – Paul was his friend and mentor (**note v. 2a**)
  - b. an *authoritative* connection to Timothy – Paul was (also) his leader and guide (**see below**)

#### b. Paul, the *apostle*

1. *apostolos* = someone set aside *specifically* for a mission; those appointed *directly* by Jesus Christ
  - a. to establish the **initial call** of the gospel – to win the first converts to faith in Jesus Christ
  - b. to establish the **ecclesia** (the Church) – to establish *leadership* and *boundaries* within it
  - c. to establish the **doctrine** of the faith – to communicate the fullness of *Christ's* teaching within it
    1. *this* aspect becomes the *basis* of Paul's charge to Timothy (**i.e.** sound doctrine)

#### c. Paul, the *one who prays*

- a. **grace** (*charis*) = kindness; good will; favor (unmerited); gift or blessing
  1. in the *biblical* sense: the **character** of God whereby he *chooses* to bestow upon *certain people* the blessings of his *benevolence* – the *radical choice* of God to bestow his gifts *in spite of them*
  2. Paul greets Timothy with “*grace*” as a *prayer* that God would continue to shower him with the benevolence, particularly as Timothy does what he is called to do (**i.e.** with strength and wisdom)
- b. **mercy** (*eleos*) = compassion; pity
  1. only in the Pastoral Letters is this word used by Paul in his greeting (**more specific?**)
  2. in the *biblical* sense: the specific aspect of grace (choice) in which God does what is **contrary** to the normal outcome of his justice – although we *deserve* to be condemned, we receive *mercy*
    - a. **mercy is what is most needed by the human race in its fallenness**
    - b. **note**: the subject of mercy will appear again in the letter (**1:13, 16**)
  3. Paul greets Timothy with “*mercy*” as a *prayer* that God would grant him success, particularly as Timothy does what he is called to do (**i.e.** that God would bless his work to succeed)
- c. **peace** (*eirēnē*, Heb. *shalom*) = harmony; tranquility; freedom from worry; genuine rest
  1. in the *biblical* sense: a change of **relationship** that precludes any sense of continuing rebellion or hostility, *specifically* in the Creator-creature sense
  2. Paul greets Timothy with “*peace*” as a *prayer* that God would grant him freedom from worry, particularly as Timothy does what he is called to do (**i.e.** against various antagonists)

## II. The Substance of the Charge (1 Timothy 1:3-11)

### Content

#### a. the nature of the charge (vv. 3-4)

1. things that can be *surmised* from this sentence
  - a. it is obvious that Paul was *in Ephesus* (with Timothy) just before writing this letter
    1. **(most likely)** Paul returned to Asia Minor after his imprisonment in order to inquire about the churches there – **i.e.** following up on the letters he wrote to Ephesus, Colossae, and Philippi
    2. since Timothy was with Paul in Rome, it is also obvious that he came with him here to Ephesus
  - b. it is probably true that Paul went from here to *visit the churches* in Thessalonica, Berea, Philippi
    1. **(again)** to inquire about them, and to find comfort amongst the people of churches he was particularly close to and had recently written to, as well
  - c. it is possible that Paul wrote this letter *very soon* after leaving Ephesus, probably from one of the churches in Macedonia – or, that Paul made the decision to leave Ephesus *very quickly* to go N
    1. Timothy would already know everything that Paul states about the false teachers in **vv. 3-7**
    2. in fact, it is *highly likely* that the work Paul had undertaken while in Ephesus was precisely what he instructs Timothy to do here – he had discovered some things when he arrived
    3. thus, there would be no need for Paul to “inform” Timothy about these matters *unless* he wished to *elaborate* on how Timothy should proceed, given that he (Paul) was no longer there
    4. therefore, Timothy is simply *continuing* the work that Paul had started, and this letter is designed to give some specific instructions on ways that *Timothy* could handle the matter
  - d. it is obvious that the primary problem facing Timothy (and Paul) in Ephesus was the advancement of “*different doctrine*” (**v. 3b**) – a substantively different set of truths than what Paul had originally set before the church and under which the believers there had come to faith in Christ
    1. “*doctrine*” (*didaskalia*; **v. 10**) = truth (simply), or the content of teaching; (more completely) truths that outline the boundaries of a particular system of thought
      - a. **e.g.**  $2+2=4$  is a *truth*, but it is only a *doctrine* in mathematics, not in Christianity; justification by faith alone is a truth central to Christianity, thus a *doctrine* of the faith
      - b. Christianity *is* a system of thought – it is a set of truths surrounding a person and work
      - c. as a system of thought, Christianity is **bounded** by a set of eternal truths revealed by God about Jesus Christ through the Spirit in Scripture – **i.e. orthodoxy**
    2. “*different doctrine*” (*heterodidaskalein*) = to teach what is *variant* to orthodoxy – **i.e. heterodoxy**
      - a. either *intentionally* (by subverting actual doctrine) or *unintentionally* (in ignorance)
  - e. it unclear exactly *what* the *heterodoxy* at Ephesus consisted of
    1. **(again)** Timothy would already be familiar with the substance; Paul would not have to define it
      - a. we will be able to do some “sanctified speculation” along the way of what it consists of
    2. nonetheless, there are some clear “side-effects” of the false teaching noted here (**in v. 4**)
      - a. “*myths*” = tales; legends; fictional stories of “godlike” heroism used to inspire; fanciful beliefs that distract from godliness into forms of “hero worship” and immorality (**1 Tim 4:6-7**)  
“If you put these things [solid teaching] before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness.”
      - b. “*endless genealogies*” = speculative use of 1) OT biblical characters or 2) family heritages to promote forms of “religiosity” that are more old covenant than new (**note vv. 7-11**)
      - c. “*speculations*” = imaginings; wonderings; questionings; lit. idle disputes – the results of questioning orthodoxy; developing new forms of “truth” based on failing to grasp the boundaries of an established faith
        1. **e.g.** in Baptist circles, the “speculations” raised in the idea of an “age of accountability”
    3. **LOW:** the heterodoxy being promoted at Ephesus was having *serious side-effects* in the lives of ordinary believers, which was distracting them from pursuing the real goal of orthodoxy
  - f. it is *absolutely certain* that Paul considered this to be something that needed continuing attention
    1. **i.e.** compare two important **verbs** in **v. 3** to see this certainty:
    2. “*as I urged you*” = to earnestly ask; to invite; to encourage; to plead
      - a. Paul does not use his position as an apostle to *order* Timothy to remain at Ephesus
        1. it seems likely that Timothy would want to continue with Paul on to the next destination
        2. it seems likely that Timothy felt *underprepared* to stand in for Paul (**see 4:12**)
      - b. Paul recognizes that he is not Timothy’s master – that role belongs only to Christ
        1. thus, Timothy was *free to decide* whether to stay, or to follow Paul
        2. and, this letter is *probably* a quick written encouragement by Paul to keep him there

3. “*you may charge*” = to command; to order; to direct with a solemn sense of authority (**see v. 5**)
  - a. a command to the false teachers to stop teaching what is heterodox, or to recover an orthodox view of the faith and end the myths and speculations arising from the false
  - b. **IOW:** for Timothy, the choice to remain in Ephesus was a *voluntary one* (**i.e.** he could do as he pleased), but the choice to teach false doctrine was *utterly wrong* (**i.e.** no tolerance for decisions to pursue other “truths” was acceptable in the church)
    1. Paul entrusts Timothy with this “*charge*” (**v. 18**) – if he is going to stay in Ephesus, then his purpose in staying there is to command the false teachers to orthodoxy
- g. it is *obvious* that we need to be sure we grasp the importance of doctrine in the church today
  1. **note:** the trend in churches today *seems* to be to move *away* from publishing a detailed doctrinal statement – many churches are either eliminated it or “slimming it down” to just a quick overview of what would be acceptable within “orthodoxy”
  2. **IOW:** the trend is to define a “welcoming” church by other factors: **e.g.** community engagement
  3. **principle: the church of Jesus Christ is defined by the boundaries of its doctrinal truth**
    - a. **i.e.** for Paul, nothing less than full adherence to the apostolic faith is what defines the church
    - b. **e.g.** this is why GFBC publishes a *thorough* statement of faith, and why we are unashamed to say that we adhere to a **reformed** view of doctrine