

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 6/24/09 Wednesday evening

New Testament Survey—1 Timothy

We're a team. That's one of the things that strikes me as I read the New Testament epistles. The Lord has chosen to work through a team of people to accomplish His mission of building His church.

The apostle Paul certainly was a team player. As you read his letters you discover the names of dozens of people with whom and into whom he invested his life for Christ's honor. And the Holy Spirit guided him to write two inspired letters to one of his primary team members, Timothy.

To do: Look at Acts 16 (and other places; use concordance) to find out as many details as you can about Timothy...

- **Who wrote the book?**

--Paul

Some modernist critics have attacked the authorship of Paul, and attributed it to a devout follower of Paul who lived in the second century. The criticism is founded on:

1) A supposed historical inconsistency with the chronology of Paul's life in Acts

2) The assertion that the heresy in 1 Timothy is the full-blown Gnosticism which came in the second century A.D.

3) The suggestion that the church organizational structure is too developed for the first century. These criticisms, and others, however, do not hold weight when examined carefully.

The Recipient of the Letter: Timothy

What did you discover about Timothy? See Acts...

--a native of Lystra, in the Roman province of Galatia (in modern Turkey) (16:1-3)

--his father was Greek, and may have died before Timothy met Paul (16:1)

--his name means "one who honors God"

--his mother was named Eunice (grandmother, Lois), both of whom devout Jews who became Christians (2 Tim. 1:5)

--they taught Timothy the OT from childhood (2 Tim. 3:15)

The Background of Timothy's association with Paul:

--Paul apparently led Timothy to Christ during his first visit to Lystra (14:6-23), on his first

missionary journey; At this time, Timothy was very young (prob. in his late teens or early twenties) since 15 years later Paul referred to him as a young man (1 Tim. 4:12). Another possibility is that Timothy's mother and grandmother, who raised him in the knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures (see 2 Tim. 3:14-15), led him to Christ.

--On his second missionary journey, Paul invited Timothy to join him in his ministry travels; he circumcised him first so his Greek background would not hinder their ministry to Jews (16:3)

--Timothy helped evangelize Macedonia and Achaia (17:14-15; 18:5), and was with Paul during much of his long stay in Ephesus (19:22).

--He traveled with Paul from Ephesus to Macedonia, to Corinth, back to Macedonia, and to Asia Minor (20:1-6). He possibly accompanied Paul all the way to Jerusalem, and was with Paul during his first imprisonment (Phil. 1:1).

--Paul often sent Timothy to churches as his representative (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:2).

--After Paul's release from prison (Acts 28), Timothy traveled with him and eventually stayed at Ephesus to deal with problems there, while Paul went on to Macedonia.

--Acc. to Heb. 13:23, Timothy was imprisoned (we do not know where) and subsequently released.

Note: Paul's closeness to Timothy is evidenced by naming him as co-sender of six of his letters (2 Cor, Phil, Col, 1 & 2 Thes, Philemon).

• **When was the book written?**

--Shortly after Paul's release from prison in Rome (A.D. 62-64).

During Paul's fourth missionary journey, Paul had sent Timothy to care for the church at Ephesus (1:3) while he went on to Macedonia. When Paul realized it might be some time before he could personally come to Ephesus, he wrote this first letter to Timothy.

• **Why was the book written?**

This letter is full of pastoral theology. It's very practical, a "how-to" manual for Timothy as he sought to help the church at Ephesus deal with challenges. Since Timothy already knew Paul's theology and doctrine well, there was no need for Paul to give much doctrinal instruction in this letter. The letter rather serves to:

1. To encourage Timothy to refute false teaching (ch. 1)
2. To supervise matters of church life in the growing church

Key Verse: 2:14-15 "I am writing to you these instructions so that...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church..."

Discuss: What are some church-issues Paul addresses in the letter? Church worship (2:1-15), the role of women in the church (2:9-15), the qualifications for church leaders (ch. 3), dealing with false teachers (ch. 4), widows-ministry (ch. 5), money (ch. 6).

Note: Timothy was not an apostle. Neither was he an overseer (Pastor) apparently, since he was given instructions about overseers in the letter. He was an apostolic representative.

- **What is the outline of the book?**

(adapted from The MacArthur Study Bible)

- I. Instructions Concerning False Doctrine (ch. 1)
- II. Instructions Concerning the Church (2:1-3:16)
 - A. The Importance of Prayer (2:1-8)
 - B. The Role of Women (2:9-15)
 - C. The Qualifications for Leaders (3:1-13)
 - D. The Reason for Paul's Letter (3:14-16)
- III. Instructions Concerning False Teachers (ch. 4)
- IV. Instructions Concerning Pastoral Responsibilities (5:1-6:2)
- V. Instructions Concerning the Man of God (ch. 6)

- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

1 Timothy was a letter Paul wrote to Timothy which teaches us how a local church is to function.

- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *1 Timothy shows us who is qualified to serve in leadership positions in the church.*

(ch. 3; along with Titus 1)

Q: What's true of a man who wants to be an overseer (pastor)? V 1

Q: What must be true if a man is to serve in such a position? V 2

Q: Beginning in verse 8, Paul lists qualifications for "deacon"? What differences do you note between the qualifications for "bishop" and "deacon"?

2. *Paul's personal testimony in 1 Timothy 1:12-17 shows that no one is ever "too far gone" for the grace of God.*

Q: For what reason did Paul thank God in 1:12?

Q: What did Paul say he once was, in 1:13?

Q: What brought about the change in Paul, acc. to 1:14? God's grace

Realize Paul wasn't seeking the Lord. The Lord broke into his life on the road to Damascus. According to Paul's own words here, the Lord chose Paul and chose to pour out His grace on him. Paul never got over the awe of that truth (he elaborates on it in 2 Tim. 1:8-9).

3. *1 Timothy offers us helpful counsel on what churches are supposed to do in various, practical areas.*

Like the role of women, like dealing with slave-master issues, and like ministering to widows (see ch. 5).

Discuss: Who is supposed to care for widows? Paul gives several guidelines...

2:4 The widow's children or grandchildren first

2:9 The church is to develop a list of widows who are "widows indeed"

2:11 Younger widows are encouraged to remarry (2:14)

2:16 sums up the widow-ministry.

A woman in the church is to care for a family member who is a widow, so that the rest of the church can care for widows in need who have no family.

Discuss: What kind of needs does Paul have in mind?