

I Tim. 1

As I was passing by a certain large Baptist Church the sign read: "Come worship with us Sunday - casual dress and contemporary music."

I suppose if there was ever a need in teachings on church order it would certainly be in our day. Church services have become a meeting for fleshly entertainment instead of spiritual enlightenment and enrichment. We see people dressed in all manner of sensual ways. We find people in positions they are not called to nor qualified to fill. And generally speaking churches have become side-tracked from what God has commissioned them to do.

I believe we would do well to hear once again the exhortations which Paul gave to Timothy. The theme of I Timothy is church order and the key verse is found in I Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God..."

V-1. Paul was an apostle or "sent one" by God our Savior. He didn't just choose the ministry as an occupation but he was called of God and commanded by the Lord to serve in this capacity.

Paul refers to Christ "who is our hope". The only hope that anyone has of getting to heaven is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Someone has pointed out in Eph. 2:14 Christ is our peace - it's in Him that we have peace concerning our sins of the past. They're under the blood!

Col. 3:4 says "Christ is our life" - it's in Him that we have power to live from day to day in our present situations. Here He is our hope - it's in Him that we have confidence of being delivered in the future.

V-2. Here we find that Timothy had been saved through the ministry of Paul. This probably occurred during his first visit to Lystra (Acts 14). Paul greets Timothy with a salutation of grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of God is giving us what we do not deserve, the mercy of God is not giving us in judgment what we do deserve. And the peace of God is the inner tranquillity that comes from leaning on the Lord.

V-3,4. It seems that Paul visited Ephesus with Timothy and when he moved on to Macedonia he instructed Timothy to stay there for awhile to teach the Word and warn against false teachers.

Paul uses a military term "charge" as an order given from a superior officer. The order was - that they teach no other doctrine and not give heed or "pay attention to" fables and endless genealogies.

These two things were associated with the false teachings of gnosticism and legalism. These things would result in questions rather than godly edifying or a godly stewardship. A godly stewardship is one that honors God in the way that truth is declared and digested not one that stirs up doubts and disputes.

V-5. Paul says the "end" or goal of this commandment or charge is to produce love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.

A pure heart is one that is inwardly clean in its meditations. A good conscience is one void of offense toward God and toward men. Unfeigned faith is "unhypocritical" or faith that doesn't wear a mask. In other words the purpose of carrying out this charge or order was to produce love for God and love for others. False teachings can't produce this - it only comes through teachings of the grace of God.

V-6,7. Paul said some had swerved from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith and had turned aside unto "meaningless talk". These were desiring to be teachers of the law and didn't know what they were talking about.

These false teachers were no doubt Judaizers who mixed law and grace and insisted that a man must be circumcised and in other ways keep the law of Moses. They taught that law was the rule of life for the believer in Christ. They failed to see that good works is the result of salvation not its root.

v-8. The lawful use of the law is to use it in preaching and teaching to bring about conviction of sin.

Someone has said the law teaches three lessons:
We ought ... We haven't... We can't.

When the law does its work in a sinner's heart he is convicted and condemned and ready to cry out to God - Lord save me by your grace.

V-9,10. Here Paul points out that the law is not for a righteous man or a saved person. In other words it is not fear of punishment that makes a Christian live a godly life - it is love for the Savior who died for us.

Here Paul refers to some 14 kinds of people whom the law condemns. These are covered under the fifth through the ninth commandments. Honor thy father... (5) Thou shalt not kill... (6) ...not commit adultery (7) ...not still (8) Or bear false witness... (9). Notice "them that defile..." is the word for a sodomite. Notice then the law is not a part of the gospel but it is to be used in declaring it.

The law with out the gospel is like the diagnosis of an incurable condition with no remedy. The gospel with out the law is like giving the remedy to those who don't sense their sickness and the judgment for their sins.

V-11. Note while the gospel is glorious the emphasis is on the good news of the "glorious God" because it tells of this glorious One who is loving and merciful and gracious to sinful men. It calls our attention to His wonderful character from which comes the message of salvation.

V-12. Paul expresses gratitude to Christ who enabled him, counted him faithful, and put him in the ministry.

V-13-17. Paul gives his testimony of what he was and how the Lord had mercy upon him and saved him by His grace.

He said in essence "I am exhibit A for proof that the grace of God really works. And ends his testimony with praise.

V-18. This charge or order that Paul gave to Timothy about sound teaching was so he could war a good warfare. And he encouraged him by reminding him of the circumstances which led to his call to Christian service.

V-19. Warring a good warfare involved holding the faith and a good conscience. It's not enough to be doctrinally correct, we have to maintain a good conscience.

V-20. Paul mentions to believers who had made shipwreck because they failed to maintain a good conscience before God and others. Like a gallant ship put out to sea rather than returning in glory with flags waving and filled with cargo they had floundered on the rocks and brought shame on themselves and their testimony. These were delivered by Paul to Satan. This may refer to an apostolic power to turn a sinning brother over to Satan for physical suffering or even death as was the case with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). This was for corrective purposes so they learn a certain lesson.

