

1 TIMOTHY
October 2, 2022

1 Timothy 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

² To Timothy, my true child in the faith:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹

What should church be like?

That is a question that could lead to debate for hours. It seems that everyone has a template for how church should function,

- what services should include
- music style
- music volume
- band
- praise team
- choir
- order of service
- order in the service
- when ordinances should be observed
- who should speak
- who shouldn't speak
- who is qualified to preach
- who is not qualified
- who decides the qualifications
- what time the service should begin
- when it should end
- should there be more than one service
- does it matter what day the services are

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Ti 1:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

- what ministries church should offer
- should meals be offered for families after funerals
- requirements for weddings
- is Wednesday a church night
- age-graded ministries integrated or separate
- Bible translation used
- Role of deacons
- Role of pastors
- Elders
- Community engagement
- Biblical authority

And more.

Even just reading those items many of you could not help but answer in your head what you believe the right answer to be. In most cases, you were right I'm sure. In some cases, your answers had less to do with biblical authority and God-ordained truth than what you personally like and perhaps preferences from your background.

The letter in our New Testament titled 1 Timothy was penned by the apostle Paul to his young pastor protégé Timothy who was serving the church in Ephesus.

In their excellent commentary on the book R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chappell state “the letter of 1 Timothy provides the exhilarating essentials to both leader and congregation as to how they must conduct themselves to the glory of God. This is cause for marked enthusiasm in our day, when there is so much confusion about what the church ought to be like.”

Amen and amen.

I love books and I love reading and my interests are pretty wide ranging, but I must say that I do enjoy reading books on church culture, missional engagement, gospel-centeredness, and even biblical leadership. These are helpful and there seem to be more made readily available today than ever.

Yet, each new book pales in comparison to that which must take precedence.

But, thanks be to God that when we need insight, when we need encouragement, when we need correction, and even when we need hope, there is a book that is more than a book. There is the book that should come off the shelf in our library first, not after the fact. This book is more than a collection of ancient, pithy sayings meant to get us through the day. This book is more than a resource for the next J. Countryman daily devotional on sale at the book rack in the grocery store. This book is not for finding a passage that affirms my already set beliefs. This book is not man-made, not man-orchestrated, and despite the doubters, conspiracy theorists, and the questioners, was not voted upon by a patriarchy in an effort to keep others down.

This book is more than a book. It is without error. It is unchanging over time. It is authentic and contextual. This book. This holy Bible is God's word.

As our statement of faith records:

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and

religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Amazingly, as we look to this passage today, these two short verses that introduce us to a letter written to a pastor and a church we are not just reading someone else's mail. We are not just reading encouragement to long-dead people in a faraway land. We are reading God's Word to us today. Thus, even a salutary introduction carries more than we can imagine...and the wise should hear and learn.

We see three characters in this passage that set the stage for what is to come. But...it is important to pause to identify these characters.

Now I know that things have changed rapidly in this digital age. I understand that there are generational differences and widening gaps among many.

This is true when it comes to mail.

Some of you, of a certain age or older, will go to your mailbox daily to see if you have any mail. It is part of your daily routine. You have done this for years. Your parents did this. Your grandparents did this. To have received mail in the mailbox but to not go get it is so far out of your realm of understanding that in a sense when that little door on your mailbox is closed, it is like Pavlov's bell and off you go to see what has been delivered.

Then, there are others of you who likely are younger than the demographic described earlier. You check your mailbox maybe once a week, if that. When you do check it, there's nothing there of value, so you do not go running when the door is shut. You just check it to clean it out on occasion.

For all, there is often a routine when the mail is delivered. There are sale papers that more often than not never get read. Magazines from

organizations you have joined that often do not get read either, unless the cover has a picture and story of interest shown. There is junk mail sent to “resident” and there’s a file for those. There are postcards that get seen as they drop from your hand into the trash can. Then, on occasion, there are letters addressed to you by name. If you’re like me, once you see your name on the envelope, you automatically look for another name. It’s often in the upper left corner. Before you open the envelope you want to see who sent it. It helps determine if it is worth opening the envelope.

The same is true with emails.

The sender is key because the sender helps the receiver understand the level of importance to place on the letter.

So, as was the case in the ancient world, the sender puts his name first.

THE APOSTLE

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...*that’s the sender.

This title of apostle used by Paul was not one he generated on his own. Sadly, over time and even currently, there are those within churches who use the term apostle now. They use it wrongly and therefore demean the meaning of the term.

Paul’s title of office was given to him by decree of God himself. As Paul uses the term here, it is the only time we see him use the phrase “by command of God” in scripture. It’s a royal title from the King himself, bestowed upon one who by his own admission was the chief of sinners. This short phrase speaks to the gifting of God upon Paul with a very specific calling.

Apostle means “one sent on a mission” and thus the apostles in scripture were sent out with a message on a mission. The apostle is accountable to the sender. The work of apostleship was to lay the foundation of the

church in a sense secondary only to Christ himself. The apostle had eyewitness accounts of Jesus. Paul was called by Christ himself and saw him and was given the title apostle.

There are some today who are seeking to restore the position of apostle. This is a dangerous movement. Frequently, those claiming the office of apostle seek authority equal to, or at least rivaling, the authority of the original twelve apostles. There is absolutely no biblical evidence to support such an understanding of the role of apostle today. This would fit with the New Testament's warning against false apostles.²

Being an apostle did not make Paul perfect or inerrant. In fact, it did not mean that every word out of his mouth was godly, right, and righteous. Just look at the account of Paul, an apostle, confronting Peter, another apostle, about Peter's hypocrisy in Galatians. Thus, it is noted that all authority does not rest in men, even if the man starts using the title "man of God." Position in the church does not give one authority over all. Our authority is found in Scripture, as Scripture is God-breathed, inerrant, immutable, and as Paul later told Timothy *"breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for the training of righteousness."*

THE SAVIOR

by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope

All authority given to Paul was from the Savior. "Christ Jesus our hope" is such an encouraging word, especially to a church struggling with polity, behavior, worship, identity, and ... well... hope. Jesus Christ is our hope. Not an organization. Not another person. Not a new job. Not a political victory. Not a nice home and material goods. Not even the local church, but Christ alone. Jesus Christ – our hope. Be encouraged.

² What is an apostle? <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-an-apostle.html>

THE PASTOR

²To Timothy, my true child in the faith:

Timothy – mentored by Paul. Raised by a godly mother in a biracial home. In a home divided by religion as well. Impacted by his grandmother for godliness and now the pastor of the church that is younger than he is, in the city of Ephesus.

Timothy was young, but gifted and called by God. He was raised with a pagan Gentile father's influence, and a godly Jewish mother's. He was circumcised so his ministry to the Jews was intact. He was learning and was thrust into a difficult role as pastor of a new church with many ideas of how church ought to be, but Paul in his compassion and affection for the young man mentored him and guided him well.

“Timothy, my true child in the faith” was a healing statement to a young man considered illegitimate by Jewish law, but spiritually legitimate in God's family. The statement was read before the church and the congregants were to get that Timothy was called, anointed, appointed, and ordained for the role he was in.

Timothy is a great encourager to those who wonder if they really fit in. Those who see their youth as something looked down upon. Those with vision, but fear not being accepted.

Be encouraged brother and sister by the faith of this young pastor.

As we enter into this series, I pray that you will receive the triple blessing that Paul offered Timothy.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.