Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A True Child of the Faith, Part 1
Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:1-2
Code: 54-1

This morning I want you to open your Bible to 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy. As Bob said, tonight we'll finish up our series on Glorifying God, Back to the Basics, and I hope you'll be here for the final message, and it will be the final one. We just have a few things to wrap up in that series that we've been looking at and what a wonderful time we've had. But for this morning and beginning today, we're going to be for the next months and years, no doubt, looking at the pastoral epistles, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. And I have had an eager heart in the months and months of preparation to begin to teach these books and am now very excited that we can begin together this morning.

We're going to be looking just to the introduction and the first two verses as we begin. Would you look at your Bible? I'll read them to you as a setting for what we're going to be saying this morning. First Timothy chapter 1 beginning at verse 1: "Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the commandment of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope, unto Timothy, genuine child in the faith, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

I want you to notice one phrase which will be the key phrase for our discussion of this greeting this morning. It is the phrase at the beginning of verse 2, "Timothy, genuine child in the faith." I want to talk about what it is to be a true child in the faith. Just as the supreme joy for a parent is to give birth to a physical child who is all that the parent's heart could ever hope for and to see that child mature and grow and develop and become fully the person, the person that you prayed he or she would become, reflecting all the perfection of human physical characteristic and all the possibility of character, just as that is the supreme joy for a parent, so the supreme joy for a spiritual parent is to be able to say about someone that they are a genuine child in the faith. Just as you would hope as a Christian, as a Christ-exalting, God-honoring Spirit-filled Christian parent that your child would be all that a physical child could be in the fullness of physical and mental and emotional and social stature, so it is that spiritually all of us would desire to raise one who would be truly a genuine child in the faith. That is a real reflection of our spiritual life and values. And for Paul to so designate Timothy sets Timothy aside in a very special way. He was Paul's very genuine reflection. He was a true child of the Apostle in terms of his spiritual life. He was all that any discipler could ever hope for, could ever pray for. He was what Paul would have wished him to be in every sense. He is the child of Paul's ministry. He is the protege, he is the offspring, he is the spiritual son which Paul has raised and he is reflective of all that Paul would desire that he should be.

And it is to this marvelous man that this and the second epistle is written. For us it is the beginning of a new adventure, an adventure with the Word of God, an in depth study of rich and profound truth that are going to come to us, first of all, in 1 Timothy. The epistle itself deals with many great subjects, subjects which were needful for Timothy to know in his ministry to the church. It deals with, for example, error in the church and how that error is to be confronted, the proper pattern for church leadership, the importance of sound theology and the centrality of teaching is a major theme, the call for godliness and holiness in living and ministry, the proper attitudes and roles of men and women in the church, how to deal with discipline in the church, how to confront issues in the church, how to deal with a sinning leader in the church, the correction of problems that threaten the church. These are themes dealt with in 1 Timothy, also in 2 Timothy and also in Titus.

I might suggest to you that the key verse in 1 Timothy is chapter 3 verse 15, you might want to look at it. We're just going to get a good overview today. First Timothy 3:15, Paul says, "If I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." And in verse 14 he says that's why I'm writing in order that you may know how to behave in the church. The first epistle to Timothy then is all about behavior in the church. It is all about the church and how the church is to conduct itself and how its leaders are to focus on the church. It's an essential essential epistle.

Now as I said, as we begin to look at this great teaching on how we are to behave and how the leaders are to behave in the church, we begin with a key phrase in verse 2 "true child or genuine child in the faith." Now that particular phrase will act for us as a doorway through which we will enter an overview of the whole letter.

Now let's look at a little bit of the introduction itself. It is a standard format. Suppose I need only to remind you that when the New Testament writers wrote their epistles they did not invent some new format, they used the existing Greco-Roman format for letters and that format you see here. It begins with the author and his identification and then the recipient and his identification. In this case, Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope, that's the author and his identification and then it's always followed by the recipient, Timothy and his identification, true child in the faith. And then comes a greeting or salutation, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. You'll notice in both cases where you have Christ Jesus in the Authorized it says Jesus Christ, the better manuscripts reverse those and that's the way I read them. So it is a standard format. It is a very simple format. It never really varies in Paul's letters. The only thing he may do is extrapolate a little bit on who he is. Instead of just saying Paul an Apostle, sometimes he'll say Paul an Apostle, and then he'll kind of define that as he does here. And he has something in mind when he does that. But that is the traditional contemporary format for a letter. It is not an unusual one.

So, in a normal way Paul writes a letter to Timothy. It is first and foremost, and you need to keep this in mind when you study the Scripture, it is first and foremost a letter from one man to another man. While we look at it as a book of the Bible and its reaching far beyond its original destination in the life of Timothy, we must go back to the realization that it began as a single man's passionate call to another man in ministry that needed to be applied to the situation in existence. And so we go back to that and that's how we understand what a book in the Bible means. If we try to interpret it only in a contemporary setting, we are at a loss as to its significance. So we go back and we ask what was happening in the life of Paul, what was happening in the life of Timothy, what was going on in the church in Ephesus where Timothy was then working and what was it that caused this letter to be written the way it was written? And out of that we draw those things which are applicable to our own understanding.

First of all, may I note the name Paul? A familiar name to any student of the New Testament, Paulus in Latin, a favorite name among Cilicians and Paul was from Tarsus a city in Cilicia. It means little or small and it may have been an indication that at his birth he was small and it may be an indication that even then when the letter was written he was small...a man not of particularly striking stature nor of particularly marked appearance, in fact he was criticized. If you read 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verses 1 and 10, read that section there in between if you will, but particularly verse 1 and 10, it indicates to us that Paul did not have anything about him that was particularly striking. And the sort of athletic minded bodily preoccupied Greeks would have looked down on his rather groveling slavish common low stature. They use the word tapeinos in 2 Corinthians 10, one to refer to him and it would be an indication of his weak unimpressive rather sickly and small stature. So it may be that he was small from the very beginning. But his name Paul sort of loses that initial significance and he becomes to us a man of tremendous stature, a man of comprehensive capability, a man uniquely used by God in the history of redemption, a man who stands head and shoulders above all men. No matter what he was physically, spiritually he is to us a giant and the very name Paul when you say it sort of belongs in massive granite block letters.

And so it is Paul who also was named Saul. And it was not uncommon for people in that particular culture to have both a Greek name, Paul, and a Jewish name, Saul, especially because he was a Jew. His father was a Jew and though he was born in a Greek-Roman environment outside of the land of Israel, born in Tarsus, born in a city which was a part of the Roman Empire, he became when he was born a citizen of Rome by birth, his father being a Roman citizen. So it was natural for him to have a Jewish name because he was of the tribe of Benjamin and the most prominent person in the tribe of Benjamin was Saul, so he was given that name, but it was also Paul and that was the name to identify him with the Greek-Roman culture into which he was born. He is called Saul, by the way, in the book of Acts until the thirteenth chapter and the ninth verse where he first begins to embark on his ministry to the Gentiles. And from them on he is never called Saul again. He was Saul in a Jewish context until he became the Apostle to the Gentiles, from then on he is known as Paul.

Now his background is very easy to identify, and I only want to do it briefly. Philippians chapter 3 and you can study this yourself, but he gives a testimony as to his background and who he was. Philippians 3:5 he says, "Circumcised the eighth day," in other words, a very traditional and orthodox Jew went through circumcision, "born of the stock of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin and Hebrew of the Hebrews." In other words, he was fully Jewish not only in terms of his physiology, but also in terms of his commitment. He was zealous for his Judaism. As touching the law he became a Pharisee. His relationship to the law was not one of looseness or indifference, he was an avid legalistic Pharisee. In terms of his zeal for his Pharisaic Judaistic religion, he was so zealous that he persecuted the church which he saw as a threat to Judaism. In terms of the righteousness which is in the law he was outwardly blameless. He conformed his life to the law in a Pharisaic interpretation, he was zealous for that to the point where he fought against and actually slaughtered those who were in his own mind a threat to Judaism.

We find this demonstrated in the seventh chapter of the book of Acts. And you remember there the record of the stoning of Stephen and it says that Stephen was being stoned. Of course the Jews were angry at the message that he had preached and they were gnashing on him with their teeth and they began to stone him. And in the process, verse 58, they cast him out of the city, stoned him and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul. Now this is Saul's, really his introduction into the picture. He is there at the stoning of Stephen. So zealous is he for the elimination of Christianity which he sees as a threat to existing Pharisaic Judaism and it indeed was that he is there as a part of those who stone Stephen. Chapter 8 of Acts, verse 1, goes on, Saul was consenting unto his death. He was not an innocent bystander, he was a part of it. And also at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the Apostle-- the Apostles. Then in verse 3 it says, "Saul made havoc of the church, entering into every house and haling men and women, committing them to prison." And that's what scattered them abroad.

So, here was a Jew of the Jews, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a man committed to a Pharisaic interpretation of the law, a man so zealous of his Judaism that he was slaughtering people who were not following properly in the path that he thought was the path of righteousness. He was breathing out threatenings and slaughters against the church, the Scripture says, and making havoc. This man, as we find later on in the book of Acts in chapter 9, was on the way to Damascus to carry out further persecution when he was stopped in his tracks, blinded by Christ Himself, saved, called to the ministry and baptized. He was then sent out to Nabatea in Arabia where for several years he wandered in the wilderness receiving from the Lord preparation for ministry. He came back, the church was afraid of him because they remembered his reputation. He was introduced to the church by Barnabas and he was accepted and then became a pastor of a church in Antioch along with other men listed in chapter 13 of Acts verse 1. He was one of those pastors in Antioch. As you read further into the chapter, he along with Barnabas, another of those five pastors in Antioch, was separated for

mission work. And in Acts 13 he then is sent to reach the world, the Gentile world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A remarkable man who in Galatians chapter 1 affirms that he did not receive his revelations, he did not receive his gospel, he did not receive his teaching from men. Nobody taught it to him, not even the Apostles, but it was given him directly by Jesus Christ. Christ saved him. Christ called him into the ministry. And Christ gave him his revelation. It is this man who is writing the letter. This man with a strong Jewish heritage, a strong Pharisaic background, a zealot for the law, who is now an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the commandment of God our Savior in Christ Jesus our hope. He is the one who writes.

Need we say anything about the word "apostle"? It means one who is sent, one who is sent. In fact, Kenneth Weist(?) says the verb apostello from which this noun comes means to send off one on a commission, to do something as one's personal representative with credentials furnished. The simplest way to translate it would be envoy or ambassador, someone who goes on a mission bearing the credentials of the one who sent him. In its widest sense, an apostle could be anybody sent, anybody. It could be even a person sent as an ambassador or an envoy in a secular environment, in a political environment. In the widest sense it's just a general word, meaning someone sent under commission with a mission to carry out.

In the New Testament sense it is used of one who was an ambassador for Christ carrying the gospel. And there were many apostles in that sense. Barnabas is called an apostle in Acts 14:14. And there are others in 1 Corinthians 15:7, it is not just restricted to Paul or even to the Twelve. There are apostles in the New Testament beyond the Twelve who were sent with the message of the gospel. In 2 Corinthians 8:23 they are called apostles of the churches, a very important term. In Philippians 2:25 Epaphroditus is called an apostle of the Philippians. So there are apostles in the very general sense of preachers who are articulate the gospel.

In Romans 16:7, "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles." Andronicus and Junia then are called messengers, or ambassadors or envoys. In Galatians, I believe, there's another reference in chapter 1 verse 19, it says other of the apostles saw I none except James, the Lord's brother. Well James the Lord's brother wasn't one of the original Twelve so he wasn't an apostle in that sense, but he is called there an apostle in the broader sense of one who is an ambassador with the gospel of Christ. They then would be apostles of the churches.

But there were twelve, with the addition of Matthias when Judas was disqualified and then there was one other named Paul who are not apostles of the churches, but they are Apostles of Christ Jesus. And that is a unique designation which sets apart the Twelve plus Paul as unique Apostles. We might say with a capital A. These men were different than the apostles of the churches, that is they were not sent by the churches, they were sent by Christ Himself. They were taught by Christ Himself, as Paul

says of himself in Galatians 1:12. And that's why here he says I am an Apostle of Christ Jesus. These men were called and chosen and sent personally by Jesus Christ. You'll remember that the Twelve were chosen by Christ, that Paul was chosen by Christ, a chosen vessel, the Lord said to him, to bring light to the Gentiles. They not only were chosen and sent by Christ, but these Apostles were witnesses of Christ personally, witnesses of His words and His deeds and His resurrection. You could not be an Apostle with a capital A unless you had seen the risen Christ. You say, "Did Paul see the risen Christ?" Yes, he saw Him in glory on the Damascus Road and he saw him two other times in exalted visions that God gave him. They were eye witnesses of the risen Christ.

Thirdly, these Apostles with a capital A were gifted uniquely by the Holy Spirit to impart divine truth. It was to them that Jesus said, "When the Spirit comes He will lead you into all truth and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you," John 14:26 and John 15:26. So they were Apostles who called, commissioned and sent by Christ, Apostles who saw Christ, heard His words and saw Him after His resurrection, Apostles uniquely gifted by Christ for the proclamation of divine truth through direct revelation.

And then finally, they were Apostles who had the ability to cast out demons and heal the sick. They had the ability to do signs and wonders and mighty deeds which are called in 2 Corinthians 12 "the marks of an Apostle." And in Hebrews 2:3 and 4 they were able to do signs and wonders and manifest gifts of the Spirit as confirmation of the message they preached. In Ephesians 2:20 it calls them foundation. The church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets.

So, Paul then in simply giving this title, an Apostle, would not tell us as much as we need to know, and so he adds an apostle not of the church but of Christ Jesus. And may I suggest an interesting note? The words Christ Jesus are usually in the reverse order. Only in the ministry and teaching and writing of Paul do we find them in this order, Christ Jesus, usually it's the other way around. And there, I believe, is a reason for that. May I suggest to you that whenever you read James or Peter or John, it is always Jesus Christ. And it may well reflect the fact that for them their first acquaintance with Jesus was indeed as Jesus the man. It wasn't until later that it became apparent to them that He was also the living incarnate Son of God. And the word Jesus is His earthly name. From the Old Testament Joshua or Jehoshua which means Jehovah saves. But still it was His human name. Then came Christ which is the name that is His name of Messiahship, it's the word anointed, it speaks of Him as sovereign, as King, as Lord. It was not until later that the disciples who first knew Him as Jesus came to understand that He was Christ. But for Paul, the first time Paul ever met Him he met Him in His glorified state in a post-resurrection vision of glory and so for Paul it is Christ and then it is to understand that that Christ whom he met was none other than the human Jesus. I don't want to read too much into it but it's a nice demonstration of Paul's perspective and we find it only characteristic of Paul to reverse those.

Now why does Paul...why does Paul take such pains to establish his Apostleship like this to Timothy? We could understand if he was writing to the church at Ephesus where Timothy is now busy, or other churches in Asia-Minor to which Timothy no doubt also was ministering. We could understand if he was trying to lay some kind of weight on his authority with a church but why does he make this statement with Timothy? Does Timothy need to be convinced? Obviously he did not. Timothy knew of Paul's authority but it is because Timothy is going to need to enforce these things in the church that Paul has the weight placed upon his own Apostleship. Timothy is an ambassador. Timothy, in a sense, is a representative of Paul. And in order for Timothy to have all the leverage that he needs to get his message across, it is important for Paul to lay down some heavy reminders about his own authority. The letter comes to strengthen Timothy's hand in what is a difficult situation.

You say, "Was it a difficult situation in which Timothy ministered?" Extremely difficult, extremely difficult. Originally when Paul and Timothy went to Ephesus, the first thing Paul had to do is in chapter 1 verse 20, he had to take Hymenaeus and Alexander and deliver them to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme. He had to remove two very key leaders in the church. For all we know they may have been pastor/teachers in that church, they may have been overseers in that church. But they were teaching heresy and they had made shipwreck, verse 19 says, of the faith. And when Paul went in there what he did was eliminate those two guys and then he set Timothy in the leadership and left. And now he's writing back to Timothy because he knows there be great difficulty in setting in order what's going on in that church because of the influence of false teachers, false doctrine. And so to strengthen Timothy's hand he affirms that this comes authoritatively from one who was commissioned not by a church but by Christ Jesus Himself...Christ Jesus Himself.

Now he's not through with this affirmation. "Paul an Apostle of Christ Jesus," now he gives us another strong statement about why he's writing, "by the commandment of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope unto Timothy." Now he is not only an Apostle by the commandment of God our Savior and Christ our hope, but he is writing by the commandment of God our Savior and Christ our hope. What he is really saying here is not only is my commission based upon God's purpose, but my letter is also, so you better listen to what it said. It's a strong word, a strong word. It's as if he said I have a direct command from God and Christ to write this letter, Timothy. Now carry this out. It puts a great burden on Timothy, it puts a great burden on the church who no doubt would have heard that letter writt...read to them.

Now just a couple of notes. The word "commandment" here is epitage and it refers to a royal commandment. It refers to the commandment from a monarch or a king which is not negotiable. It's not an object for discussion. He is under orders from the sovereign of the universe. And now Timothy is under orders from the sovereign of the universe and so is the congregation to which Timothy carries out the ministry. Usually, and I think for many people who have studied 1 Timothy, this somehow gets overlooked. But usually Paul would refer to himself as Paul an Apostle by the will of God, doesn't that sound familiar? By the will of God. And that's true, such as in 2 Timothy where

that's exactly what he says, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God according to the promise of life, and so forth. But here he doesn't talk about the will of God and the promise of God, he talks about the commandment of God because there are some things that are in great disarray in this church. This church has been around long enough to have problems, false teaching, sin. And so he comes on very strong, speaking from commandments. And his orders come from to beautiful phrases, "God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope." God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope. Marvelous, marvelous phrases.

You know, someone once said, and I think it's really a great thing to remember, that Christianity is a religion of personal pronouns. I like that. We read it in the Psalm that I read to you this morning. My own God, God our Savior, Christ our hope. Ours is not a belief in some distant deity to be appeased, someone we fear to touch or draw nigh unto, ours is a...is a faith that involves intimacy, possession.

Notice that Paul says "God our Savior and Christ our hope" and therefore links God and Christ. This is an allusion to deity on the part of Christ. He links together as co-equal as the source of his divine commission God and Christ. Now this is most important. Starting in the gospel account moving all the way through the New Testament you will find that Jesus repeatedly links Himself up with God. Of the over 70 times that He refers to God in terms of His communion with God and talking to God, only one time does He call Him anything other than...what?...Father. And He does that in order to emphasize that they are of the same essence, like begets like. In fact when He said in John 5 that I work and My Father works and linked Himself with God in common essence and common privilege, the Jews became infuriated and said He's making Himself equal with God. God is always designated as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, God and Christ are inseparably linked.

And so, what Paul is doing here by saying God our Savior and Christ our hope is linking Christ and God to the same essence therefore articulating the deity of Jesus Christ. And I think that was very important at the outset because apparently it was under question among some of the people to whom Timothy ministered. Chapter 3 verse 16 he says, "And without controversy," somehow in Ephesus there was some controversy about this, there was some discussion about this, but there shouldn't be for great is the mystery of godliness that God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on the world and received up into glory. That's a creedal description of the work of Christ. Apparently there were some who were even attacking the deity of Christ and there is a necessary reminder that there's no controversy on that issue, God was manifest in the flesh. And so, God our Savior and Christ our hope linked together the Father and the Son in common life and that's as it ought to be. As I've said, that is a ringing theme throughout the gospel record, those two are one.

In Matthew 11:27, "All things are delivered unto Me by My Father, no man knows the Son but the Father, neither knows any man the Father except the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." That's a common kind of statement Jesus makes to link Himself inseparably with God. And you

can always find in false religions systems the denial of the deity of Jesus Christ. There must have been an aberrant Christology, there must have been an attack on the character of Christ.

And then he also says "God our Savior," I suppose there are some people who believe that...and we know about them, liberal theologians have many of them acquiesce to this view, that the God of the Old Testament is an angry, mad, vengeful, furious, wrathful God who wants to destroy everybody but Jesus Christ came along and appeased Him. The idea that God is a God of anger and judgment and fury and Christ is the loving gentle Savior who comes and appeases this angry God. Nothing could be further from the truth. God is our Savior and salvation began not with Christ but with...whom?...with God. It was God who master planned salvation from the very beginning, God our Savior.

That, by the way, is a very interesting phrase that appears only in the pastoral epistles. It is a unique phrase to the pastoral epistles. But is derived from the Old Testament. Throughout the Old Testament the designations are very clear that God is a Savior. And I don't want to belabor the point but just to mention that repeatedly in the Old Testament the text of Scripture speaks about God saving, God reaching out in salvation. For example, were you to look at the Psalms, see if I can mention a couple that come to mind, Psalm 25:5, "Lead me in Thy truth and teach me for Thou art the God of my salvation." This is not foreign to God, this is God's desire. "The Lord," verse 1 of 27 says in the Psalms, "The Lord is my light and my...what?...salvation." Verse 9 it says, "Thou hast been my help, leave me not neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." And Psalm 42, is it, verse 5, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou disquieted in me, hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." In other words, God is a God of salvation. God is a God of grace. God is a God of deliverance that the Old Testament makes abundantly clear. In Habakkuk 3:18, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." So, we want to keep in mind that God is not an angry God being appeased by a loving Christ, but God is a Savior.

In Luke 1, do you remember this? "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." That was the expression of one who wanted to offer worship to God. God the Savior. In Jude 25, "To the only God our Savior."

So, this phrase basically comes from an Old Testament perspective. God is the source of salvation. And we must never think of God wanting to damn men and Christ wanting to save them from God's damning designs. God is our Savior. Now there may have been some reason among the Ephesians for Paul to say this. There may have been some who were teaching that God was not interested in salvation. That also kind of makes sense because of chapter 2 verse 3, it says there in 1 Timothy, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who will have all men to be...what?...saved." So there may also have been, it's very difficult and I might as well say this at the beginning, it's very difficult to reconstruct the error in the Ephesian church to which Paul writes. We really can't...we can't get a handle on it. It's very elusive. It has Jewish elements and it also has Helenistic or Greek elements. Some kind of false religion was moving through that congregation and

threatening the church. And of course, Ephesus was a flag-ship church, sort of leading all the other churches of Asia Minor and it was important to keep it corrected. But it must have been that somewhere along the line there was some questioning about whether God was really Savior because it's repeated by Paul the only place he ever uses it, as I said, is in the pastoral epistles. It must have been of some issue. So God is our Savior.

By the way, chapter 1 verse 11 emphasizes it in other terminology, "According to the glorious good news from the blessed God." Again emphasizing that God has given us the good news.

So, beloved, what we want you to understand is Paul is simply saying that salvation began with God and was brought to us through Christ. God our Savior, that's past tense, that's the source. Christ our hope, that's the future promise. God designed the plan and Christ brought it to pass and He is our hope. The reason we can hope in the future is because of what Christ has done, right? Our future hope is tied to Jesus Christ. The salvation that God planned and God designed is realized in Christ Jesus through His death and resurrection. He has become our hope for future glory. In Philippians chapter 3 verse 20, "Our citizenship is in heaven from which also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." We're looking for Him to come and change our vile bodies and make it like His glorious body. He's our hope. He's our hope. Colossians 1:27 says, "Christ in you the hope of glory." First John 3:2, "When we see Him we'll be like Him. And whoever has this hope purifies himself."

So apparently there were some errorists, some false teachers, some heretics in this church that Timothy was laboring with and they were wanting to rob the church of salvation. They were defining a God who was not a Savior. Maybe it was an incipient Gnosticism where God was a distant being who started everything and was far off and didn't care and there were a series of emanating sub-gods off of Him through which we would try to go and get some appeasement and Jesus was one who would go to this angry indifferent God and sort of appease Him and make things better for us. Whatever it was we really can't label it, there must have been some who were attacking the very...the very essence of God's redeeming love and some who also were attacking the character and deity and work of Jesus Christ. And so even in the introduction there are allusions to this. He says in verse 15, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief." He emphasizes the work of Christ, the gospel saving work of Christ. And again as I mentioned in chapter 3 verse 16, again he mentions the work of Christ. In chapter 4 verse 10, again another allusion to this. "We labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God who is...what?...the Savior of all men." There must have been some denial of this...especially of those that believe. Chapter 6 verse 14, "Keep this commandment without spot unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ which in His times He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." And again there's another allusion to the deity of Christ, the Saviorhood of Christ and so forth, in talking about the fact that He's going to come in glory at His great appearing and so forth and so on. So there must have been some argument about the Saviorhood of God and the coming of Christ and the hope of the future and so forth.

So the letter then has great import because there are some very basic things that issue here like the fact that God is a loving God who wants to save and like Christ is the Son of God, God in human flesh who has died for us and so forth. I mean, the very issues of salvation are at stake in this letter. So the letter comes then with a heavy emphasis on authority because there has to be an understanding among those people that this letter is coming from one who was commissioned by God and Christ and one who is writing by the direct will of God and Christ to speak to issues which are at stake in that church.

And isn't it sad to think about the fact that here we are about the middle of the sixties, about 64 A.D. we're about 30 years away from the death of Jesus Christ and already inside the church there are those who would deny the loving, redeeming, saving plan of God and the deity of Jesus Christ? This is 30 years after His death and already that's not outside the church, that's in the church. And who do you think brought it in? Take a wild guess. That's the work of the adversary. And so we learn what Paul learned very early and especially working with the Ephesian church which he had warned already earlier before this was ever written that when I leave you're going to have problems. Remember that in Acts 20? Perverse men are going to rise from within you. Wolves are going to come in and try to mess you up. I know it will happen as soon as I leave, he said. And I commend you to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up. I know what will happen. And sure enough, he left and it happened. And it happened so extensively that by the nineties when John wrote the Revelation, the letter to Ephesus was that you for all intents and purposes have left your first...what?...love. The Ephesian church became the victim of error initially and then apparently it got its act together under Timothy, corrected the error and then became a victim of apathy and indifference. And it's an old story, beloved, the enemy will work on the church in whatever way the church will allow it. If the enemy cannot corrupt the theology, the enemy will bring apathy. And here we have a chronolog of this Ephesian church, first this a glowing and exciting and thrilling church in its beginnings. It becomes THE church to which Paul gives three years of his life to lay the foundations. The church to which he gives Timothy for oversight and leadership among its already established leaders at this particular time. But in the process of moving from the ministry of Paul till the time that Timothy has come there, in those very few years, maybe ten or twelve years at the most, the church has already reached a place where heresy is filling the place. Timothy apparently was able to set that right. And in a few years after that, the church has become totally apathetic and lost its first love.

It's a frightening thing to think about. But the reason the New Testament gives us these letters is so that we can continually be correcting the same things that will always exist in the life of the church. Well, it's from Paul an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the commandment of God our Savior and Christ our hope. And then verse 2 says, "Unto Timothy." The name is made up of two Greek words. One means to honor and the other is the word for God. Timothy means one who honors God. It's a beautiful name...one who honors God, or he who honors God. No doubt it was given to him by his mother and

grandmother who must have been devout Jews because according to 2 Timothy they taught him the Scriptures from a child. I believe that it's most likely his father who was a pagan, who was a Greek, not a Jew, was not a Christian, not a believer and may well have been dead at this particular time. But it's certainly not a factor in Timothy's spiritual progress, the factors were his mother and grandmother and perhaps they had named him "he who honors God" wishing with all their hearts that he would indeed live up to his name which in fact he did. His grandmother's name was Lois, according to 2 Timothy 1:5 and his mother's name was Eunice and they had carefully and faithfully taught him the Word of God. In fact in 2 Timothy 3:15, "From a child you have known the holy Scripture."

So they gave him a name of great great significance. Timothy, this young man, was a beloved and trusted companion of the Apostle Paul. In fact, probably more than any other was the protege the number one product of Paul's ministry, his disciple, his replacement. The reason I say that is 1 Corinthians chapter 4 in verse 16 as he writes to the Corinthians, he says, "I beseech you, be ye followers of me." Pattern your life after me. "And because I want this...this is marvelous...because I want you to be just like me I sent you Timothy." Isn't that great? I want you to be like me so I sent you Timothy. You say, "Well why does he do that?" "Who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord who will bring you into remembrance of my ways." In other words, I want you to be like me so I'm sending you Timothy who is exactly like me. He'll bring you in to remembrance of my ways. He does things the way I do. He is my child in the faith.

This marvelous man, Timothy, who was with Paul for up to 20 years from the time of his conversion as a man in his late teens to the time of about 35 years of age when he's receiving this letter, all of that time he's been with Paul in some kind of ministry with the exception of the time that he sort of seems to disappear during Paul's imprisonment. He was left behind at Berea with Silas when Paul escaped to Athens and later joined Paul there. In due time he came to Athens, in Acts 18 he was sent as Paul's emissary to Macedonia in Acts 19, he was there when the collection from the churches was being taken to Jerusalem with Paul in Acts 20. He was with Paul in Corinth when he wrote his letter to Rome. He was Paul's emissary to Corinth when there was trouble in the church, as I read you in the fourth chapter of 1 Corinthians. He was with Paul when he wrote 2 Corinthians. It was Timothy who went to see how things were going in Thessalonica and he was with Paul when he wrote the letter to that Thessalonian church. He was with Paul in prison when he wrote the letter to the Philippians. He was with Paul when he wrote the Colossians. He was with Paul when he wrote Philemon. He was constantly with him...a beloved disciple. The son of a Jewish mother, a son of a Greek father, he was a perfect companion. He had the Jewish heritage to have access into the synagogue where Paul always began his ministry. He had the Gentile background to understand the culture and be accepted by the Gentiles as well. He was a unique and marvelous tool of God.

But the most important thing that Paul can say about him, and this is what I want to focus on this morning just to introduce it and then next week we'll develop it, he calls him "true child, or genuine

child in the faith." That is a marvelous marvelous and rich statement. This opens up tremendous insight into the character of Timothy. Now next Sunday I'm going to give you the five characteristics of this true child in the faith which are the five goals and objectives for every discipler, the things that you would want to see produced in anyone that would be your child in the faith. I think it will be one of the most significant, one of the most basic, one of the most transferable sermons that I have ever preached on what it means to raise up a true child in the faith. The word "child", just to look at this phrase for a moment, is teknon, comes from tikto which means to beget. It's not talking about a mature son, it's talking about a begotten or born son. In other words, the emphasis is not on the fact that Timothy is his child, but on the emphasis...the emphasis is on the fact that Paul gave birth to Timothy. It is a birth word. You are my product. You are a genuine child in the sense of the parent/child relationship. You owe me your spiritual life. You are my offspring in the faith.

And, you are a genuine offspring. I love that word, gnesios, it is the opposite to nothos, Nothos means bastard, or illegitimate. Gnesios means legitimate. This is a legitimate child. This is a true child. This is a genuine child. This is, may I make a comparison, no Demas. Second Timothy 4:10, Paul had another follower by the name of Demas but it says, "Demas hath...what?...forsaken me, having loved this present world." Demas was a nothos, he was a bastard child, an illegitimate child. This is a genuine child. Not in the physical sense but in the spiritual sense, and that's what the phrase "in faith or in the faith" means. It doesn't have an article, it's what we call anarthorus(?), that is without the article, it's literally in faith but it can still be translated in the faith. If it's in faith it is subjective. In other words, he became my child in the sphere of faith. He lives with me in the sphere of faith where those dwell who have faith in God. Or he could be saying in the faith in an objective sense, that is in the content of the revealed faith. He is my child in faith, that's true because he put his faith in Christ, I put my faith in Christ and so we are together in the sphere of faith subjectively. It well could be too in THE faith and I prefer that as do most scholars. He is my child in the faith, that is he's my child not in the human realm but in the realm of the faith. That is in terms of Christianity and in the sphere of the faith. But his spiritual birth was real. His spiritual birth was genuine. He is really my child.

What a joy! I mean, what a thrill for someone to have someone like that. To be able to say to the Corinthians...I want you to be like me so I'm sending him because he's exactly like me. O, bless God, what a joy that would be...to have that kind of reproduction.

What Paul is saying is this, beautiful beautiful way of expressing this, that Timothy...Timothy is running true to form. Timothy is true to his spiritual parentage. He is showing marked resemblance to me. In other words, look, people, he represents me there among you. He reflects my will, my desire, my patterns of spiritual life. He is born of God and he is my protege, my child, genuine, the product of my discipling.

And so this is all very important because the Ephesians are going to resist the efforts that are made here. Not the ones that were good and solid and true to the faith but the rest. And they needed to

come alongside Timothy against the error and the heresy and the false leadership. And all of this authority is very very important. I'm commending Timothy to this church as my own genuine child. And that's in the heart of Paul in Philippians. He says a wonderful thing. He has such a great affection and love for Timothy. He says in verse 16 of Philippians 2, "I trust in the Lord Jesus to the Philippians to send Timothy." I want to send Timothy. Why? "I have no man like-minded." I don't have anybody like him. Everybody else seeks their own things, not the things which are Jesus Christ's but you know the proof of him that as a son with a father he has served me in the gospel. Isn't that marvelous? I don't have anybody like him. Everybody else is serving their own desires. You know, I'll tell you something, folks, that's comforting to me. That's very comforting because no matter how hard you try sometimes to produce disciples, you look long and hard and there are far and few between who really are like-minded with you who really could be sent as your ambassador, as your emissary, as your replica into a very difficult situation. And for Paul to have such a Timothy is to have a cherished treasure beyond description. And is it any wonder that he wrote 2 Timothy to him when he saw him begin to kind of fall in to a weak pattern in his life and try to strengthen him because he was so critical to him? That's not written to him in some kind of ministerial professional tone, that's written as the cry of the heart of a spiritual father and discipler who is saying please don't abandon what I know you to be, don't become something less than I've seen you to be. I don't think my heart could stand it, nor could the work of Christ.

So, he has a genuine son in the right place. And then to strengthen again this issue he has a greeting, "Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." That beautiful phrase usually is just grace and peace, he throws mercy in there because Timothy is going to need all of them in dealing with his problems and his situation. Grace refers to God's undeserved favor, love and forgiveness given to sinners to free them from the consequence of sin. Mercy doesn't free us from the consequence of sin, it frees us from the misery that comes along with sin. Grace wipes out the sin, mercy wipes out the misery. And then there's the word peace and peace is the result of grace and mercy. It means not only harmony with God but tranquility of the soul. And so he says, Timothy, this is my wish for you, grace because grace is not just needed at salvation, is it, don't we need grace after salvation to keep on cleansing us? And mercy is not just needed at salvation, don't we need mercy to keep on delivering us from the misery of sin? And don't we always need peace? And again he emphasizes it's from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord, linking Christ to God again and emphasizing they belong to us in a personal way. And I might say here it seems also that part of this heresy was to depersonalize God and depersonalize Christ. And so he throws four uses of the word "our" in those first two verses...equal deity, personal possession.

So the whole thing is really introduced to us in those two verses from Paul who has tremendous passion for this Ephesian congregation because of his own three years invested there. He wants them to listen so he lays down his credentials as strongly as he can and makes allusion to their heresies regarding Christ and God and the Saviorhood of God and the hope of Christ. He gives Timothy all the weight he can by saying he's a true reproduction of me and then asks God to pour out

on Timothy continuing grace, continuing mercy and continuing peace that he may carry out the work that he is commissioned to do.

Now with that as a background, next week I want to develop the whole idea of what Timothy is as a true child and developing that you will see an overview of the entire epistle. Let's bow together in prayer.

Thank You, Father, for the opportunity to begin a new and a fresh and a wonderful book for the adventure that awaits us, we bless Your name. O Father, I pray too for those who might be in our midst this day who do not know God our Savior and Christ our hope. May this be the day of the awakening of salvation in their lives. Bless, Lord, every life, every heart, every soul. For those who know You, may we be true children in the faith and may we seek to raise up true children in the faith who can represent us in the ongoing work of Your glorious Kingdom. Prepare our hearts, Lord, for what is ahead and work in our hearts even this day for Christ's sake. Amen.

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