

Thursday, August 18, 2022 ▫ Read 1Tim 1:1–2

Questions from the Scripture text: Who wrote this letter (v1)? What office did he hold? Of Whom was he an apostle? By Whose commandment? What has He done? By what other Name do we know Him? What is He to us? To whom was this letter written (v2)? What does he call him? In what is he a true son? What three things does the apostle bless him with from Whom?

Who were Paul and Timothy to one another, and how does that factor into the reformational work needed at Ephesus?

1Timothy 1:1–2 looks forward to the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the apostolic foundation of reformational ministry takes us back to God Himself in Christ, because He is our God, He is our hope, He is our holiness, He is our help and happiness.**

Christ is our God. His order/organization for the church isn’t just a suggestion or example but a “commandment.” Though the word ‘apostle’ means “sent one,” the office is very specific. Jesus called apostles *in person* and appeared to them after His resurrection (cf. 1Cor 9:1; 1Cor 15:7–8). v1 refers to this, in Paul’s case, as the commandment of God.

This letter (and then Titus, and 2Timothy) was written during Paul’s second Roman imprisonment, just before his death. We learn from the letter that the once great church in Ephesus has allowed false doctrine, unholy living, and disorderly church worship and operation to creep in. But the apostle has a commandment from his God, Savior, Lord, Prophet, Priest, and King: God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ. And this letter is the fulfillment of that ministry, filling out a few more of those things that had remained for Jesus to say before His death (cf. Jn 16:12–15).

Christ is our hope. The last word (in our English translation) of v1 is such a needed one for Timothy! He is a comparatively young, perhaps timid man who is being charged with leading a fairly significant reformation in a church that has spiritually declined. He needs to know that Christ is his hope for his salvation, for his faithfulness, and for this work to bear fruit. This word ‘hope’ doesn’t mean a wish that is in doubt; in the New Testament, it means some future good that has been assured. Let every believer know that Jesus is such a hope for his life, and let every minister know that Jesus is such a hope for his ministry.

Christ is our holiness. Timothy’s father was an unbelieving Greek (cf. Ac 16:1), but he bore the family-resemblance of the faith of his grandmother and mother (cf. 2Tim 1:5) and now also of Paul; the apostle calls him “a true son in the faith” (v2). This way of speaking includes his doctrine and his works in the ministry, but has a special focus upon his character and his manner. Paul is about to be taken from the church, but he leaves behind at least one—and soon, hopefully(!), many more—man who is his ministerial spitting image.

But this resemblance comes not only from Paul as spiritual father, but another and infinitely greater Father. We know God as “our Father” (v2) especially in Jesus Christ, the Son. He is the full display of the Father in human flesh (cf. Jn 1:18; Jn 14:9). It is to this Son to Whose image we have been predestined to be conformed (cf. Rom 8:29). And this is the ultimate sonship for a believer. When we see God making us to resemble faithful ones whom He used in our lives, we know that ultimately this goes back to a reflection of His own image in Christ (cf. 1Cor 11:1).

Christ is our help and happiness. “Grace” is all that God is for all that we lack. Strength for our weakness (cf. 2Cor 12:9). Righteousness for our sinfulness and life for our death (cf. Eph 2:1–10). “Peace” is related; it’s that condition of health and wholeness in every way, which is the result of having God be for us. So, the apostle often joins these two.

But here (and the other two pastoral epistles), he also adds “mercy.” It’s that gentle kindness of God in time that proceeds from His electing love in eternity. It emphasizes that the grace and peace are not merely transactional but personal, the outflowings of a good God Who is pleased to make us the objects of this mercy. This supplies not just the help of what God can do for us but the happiness of Who God has made Himself to be to us. How Timothy would need to know and cling to this as a reforming minister in Ephesus!

Why shouldn’t the variety of approaches to “church” lead us to believe that there are many right ways? Whom do you know on earth that is an example like that of Paul for you? Whose resemblance, ultimately, should we be hoping to bear? How can this happen? Why would God do so?

Sample prayer: Lord, as our God and Savior and Hope, You have given commandment concerning how we must operate in Your church. Forgive us for when we think or act as if there are many right ways of operating in Your church. As we have no strength or life or goodness in ourselves, give these to us in Your grace as You did for Timothy, so that we too may have Your peace. Since our sin is against Your glory, make us to know You through Jesus Christ, Who Himself is the brightness of Your glory, so that we may rejoice to be objects of Your mercy, which we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP23B “The Lord’s My Shepherd” or TPH429 “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

First Timothy chapter 1 verses 1 and 2. These are God's words, Paul and Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God, our Savior and the Lord, Jesus Christ, our hope to Timothy a true son in the faith grace, mercy and peace from God. Our Father and Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

So far the reading of gods inspired and inerrant word as most of not all of the letters of the New Testament. No, not all. Definitely is. Most of the letters in New Testament do begin by identifying the writer Paul. Of course, he was the one who had started as that Pharisee of Pharisees, who stripped all other first cycle men of his time.

And in his zeal was great, persecutor of the church and who also had a Roman citizenship and one of his Latin then names. Transliterated here. In Greek Palace is Paul. When he went by this gentile name, especially in his ministry as he was the Apostle to the Gentiles, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

This is a word, of course, that means a sent one. Someone who acts in behalf as Christ into those who were sent but it's also the name of a very specific title or very specific office rather in the New Testament in the church. And that is someone he had received their call from the Lord, Jesus Christ in person and who had witnessed Jesus after his resurrection.

We know that, of course, from other versus passages in the New Testament. So he's writing as someone who's a limited who belongs to a limited set that group to whom were promised in John chapter. 16 the specific ministry of the Holy Spirit in which the things that remained for Jesus to say the Holy Spirit would tell to the apostles so that the complete words of Christ, not only in the Old Testament, as the Spirit of Christ wrote through those prophets and spoke through those prophets.

We learned the first Peter chapter 1 but the spirit of Christ speaking through the apostles and the New Testament and all that. Jesus had to say for his church, would be contained. And so he is writing in again, his role as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Jesus, the Savior who received this name as a baby because he had become a man.

And of course, the Christ, the great prophet that Moses had promised the great High Priest. After the order of them as an act from before the priestly family of Aaron until after Aaron's family's priesthood was set aside of Jesus stepping into his priesthood in his humanity and the great king.

So he is the anointed the forever king, the son of David. He's the anointed in those three ways, he is the Christ. So is the Lord who became a man to save Jesus and he is the great prophet. The great high priests the forever. King the great king the Christ And Paul is writing as an Apostle.

Jesus Christ, almost to the end of his life. We have first Timothy and Titus and second Timothy, which are called the pastoral epistles. Commonly called the pastoral epistles, They're written during Paul's second. Roman imprisonment, We see at the end of the book of Acts as first. Roman imprisonment, the one that he was in at the time that he wrote the book of Philippians and expecting to be released and not to die as he says in Philippians and we know from the book of Romans that he was planning to continue on, in his missionary journeys to be sent by the Church of Rome West into Gaul, which we know now is Spain and a very, very early church history Clement.

A bishop of believe. Rome, Anyway, Bishop named Clement and the late late first, early second century records for us that Paul did. In fact, make that journey. Now, this imprisonment has to be different than the one at the end of Acts in which he wrote in Philippians that you would be released from it soon.

Because by the time he finishes the third of the pastoral epistles, second Timothy, he writes that he's done, he's expecting very soon that the outcome would be his death. Now, dying is not a grief to ministers and apostles at least not to them. According to their new nature in Christ's grace.

It may be a grief to the flesh and it is an enemy, our own dying. Anyways. Not a brief So much as churches that are tolerating error and sinking into immorality and are disorderly and not following the prescriptions of the Lord, Jesus in hell. The church operates and that's what First Timothy addresses, and really all three pastoral epistles.

First Timothy and Titus and 2nd Timothy. And that's the order in which they were written in our Bibles. They appear first second first and second Timothy, and then Titus, but they address those three things. The creep of error into the church, the creep or increase of immorality in the church and disorderliness not following the Lord, Jesus's pattern for the elders, and the deacons, and the worship services and how ministers are to conduct themselves.

And how the various groups in the church are to interact with one. Another is very different. Then very different style than, you know, the ARP form of government or the PCA Book of Church order, etc. But it is a sort of church order first, First Timothy Titus and second, Timothy and, especially first, Timothy and Titus deal with those things.

So he's writing as an apostle to a church. That initially was perhaps the exemplary church. We know from from early writing that when Paul was an emphasis for those three years he was preaching and teaching five hours a day and they had hunger for that. It was a church that was full of prayer as a church that by the time Revelation is written, which is not too long after the pastoral epistles.

Paul is probably martyred somewhere in the AD67, to AD 69 range. And it's almost certain that the book of Revelation is written before the the fall of the temple.

But by the time Revelation is written Ephesus which is where Timothy is the elder and is supposed to be, you know, ordaining, new elders for them Ephesus is not where they once were they have lost their first love. They're they're still doing a lot of the right things, especially doctrinally, But one of the things that they have done is they have allowed

Love for, and it commitment to the Lord Jesus in his church to move to the the, well, not even moved to the periphery, just to decline. So that's kind of the setting in which it occurs, it's a church that had a really strong spiritual history, very strong, teaching history Ephesus had had not only Paul but also Apollos and Timothy and the apostle John as ministers.

They are at times. And yet what Paul had predicted in Acts chapter 20 to the Ephesian elders that there would be those who rise up from among them appear as elders. But end up being wolves and they would bring the flock after them, and the result would be the devouring souls.

This has taken place. And so these two letters to Ephesus and one to Crete where Titus is ministering these three letters seek to address a situation that is actually very much like our situation in the church today or at least in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. We have a history of great teaching the history pure worship.

We have a history of spiritual revival in which the people hungered and longed for, and devoured, and delighted in the preaching of the word and in gathering for prayer and calling upon the name of God and truth, vital religion was the order of the day at times in the homes as the homes would open the day together and close the day to gather in worship, and especially in the word and where the middle of the day and all of the ordinary duties of life.

And Yes, we're Scott's Presbyterianism began and had its height. There are very ordinary duties. Yeah. Cutting cutting Pete and saw it and hurting sheep and shearing. And all of the necessary things just to stay alive in between the worship times and trying not to get killed by British mercs.

But the ordinary duties of life were shaped by and saturated with the Word of God. Very probably didn't have five hours of sermon a day. They weren't as affluent as the Ephesian church was in the first century, but there's a similar spiritual history and sadly. There's this in lower spiritual decline and we won't go over just now what all that decline is, but what we need is the same apostolic foundation.

The same remedy that this apostle towards the end of the time of the apostles sent back to this church for its Reformation reminders, for the necessity of sound doctrine, and maintaining it. And resisting false doctrine reminders that true doctrine, or, we should maybe say accurate doctrine is not actually good doctrine, unless it has lived out in a life of worshipful service and worshipful holiness unto God.

Not the do goody service in which work proud of ourselves. But serving as a responsive workshop to the god who has redeemed us, not the sort of superficial religion, in which we select which boxes matter and usually they're the ones. We feel like we can check off better than others, and then we check them off and we feel better superior to others and even commendable to God.

But that holiness that comes not only in response to what the Lord Jesus has done to us, but in union with him, loving to live out by faith, the life of Christ, in our own life, or rather to have Christ by His Spirit, cause his life to be lived out in us.

And that really the loss of true doctrine is a loss of Christ. The loss of holy living in the in the biblical, The biblical type or quality of holy living, is the loss of living life in the union with the Lord Jesus Christ. And to just display His glory is the one who has transformed us.

And so, and then the third thing, of course, the means by which the Lord maintains to us as doctrine and works out and us his life, the means that he has chosen that his spirit attends of his grace, the gatherings of the church with those whom the Lord has called to the, to the shepherding, and to the teaching ministry and each having the specific Christ assigned roles that he uses for the, the inter-strengthening of each, which we have Ephesians 4 earlier.

In Paul's ministry, of course, in Ephesians 4, a description of and that the outworking of what it looks like to have that shepherding and teaching ministry that equips, the men to do this, and the women to do that. And you know, a little bit more about the types of problems that church officers have to deal with and what they should, what they should do about it.

So, this is kind of an expansion of that. So or five words in, no, six, Paul, and apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment. Yeah, I don't know why. There are some who think that just because man has come up with a whole bunch of different ways of organizing the church that God somehow has not prescribed how he runs his church or that Christ does not prescribe.

It, this is not just a suggestion, this is not just an example. In order for us to draw general equity principles from it, like, we would do, with the Civil law, This is the commandment of God, our Savior, and the Lord, Jesus Christ, our hope which, of course, reminds us that before, Jesus Christ was ever a man, He is the Lord God from all eternity Men.

Do not issue joint commands, or mere men. Do not issue joint commands with the Living God. And so his reminding us that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. Our Savior that the triune God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, His name is put upon us and in baptism. And we read through much of the book of Ephesians, Lord's day morning, in the sermon, and saw all of the expressions of the Trinity in the church in these.

Last days and as God has determined, especially the church as the way that he would glorify himself in creation and history. The Lord Jesus Christ. Is the incarnate second person of the Trinity. He is the chief way that God has shun himself our Savior. So that we know that the Father has determined to save in the sun as applied by the spirit.

And we, We saw a lot of that. I want to take the extra time now to redo what we did Lord's day morning in the sermon. So Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ. Remember the church needing its Reformation and renewal great mercy to us. That God would permit that to happen even during the age of the apostles.

Why? Because it's not just the Scott's Presbyterians but everywhere where the church that has been faithful throughout the history of the last 2,000 years. It is also gone through decline. And so, the Lord has prepared us to be able to address that independence upon him, Paul and Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God, our Savior, and the Lord, Jesus Christ, our hope and not, that's not just hope.

Like, I wish it could happen, but it might not. Now the New Testament word, hope means something that is certain even though it is still future and we cling to it with confidence and that's important because it's not just important for us. As really important for Timothy, you can imagine, he's a young man, or at least comparatively young, and there are many who are not heeding him, and he's got his work cut out for him because he's supposed to now.

But do this ministry of Reformation and the retraining of church officers and and implement what's being sent sent here. But the message comes from the apostle of Christ and the certainty or of the outcome that God intends is guaranteed by the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, when you have a book of how to address a particular situation and all of the details of that identifying, the current problems and applying Christ's spirit, given solutions, we can very easily redirect our hope to the right analysis and the right calculating the right response and and the skillful implementation of that response.

We tend to do that in our own lives. Don't we? We recognize something we've been doing wrong. We we come up with a plan of how we're going to do it and then we start to correct it and then we start implementing the plan and what's the danger in our minds and hearts?

As we do that, The danger is in shifting, our hope from Christ himself, his own finished work, and his life, and the guarantee of the spirit finishing, the application of his work as church. We we very easily go from hoping in that to hoping in ourselves and thinking that because of what I've recognized, we've been doing long because of the new plan for how we're going to address it and because of how well we implement the new plan, this is what's going to make the difference.

But it's Christ who makes the difference. And we do those things because Christ has given us instruction, and wisdom and commandment to do those things.

But we must hope in him, who gave the instruction, who gives the wisdom, who gives the commandment, who atones for the guilt of the sin.

And for who overrules for the weakness of both the sin and our finitude. So the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope to Timothy a true son in the face. Timothy, of course had an unbelieving father. We learned when Paul meets him and I believe it's at 16 now. I don't remember when Paul meets him.

He is described as the son of a believing mother with an unbelieving Greek father. So Timothy what has been kind of spiritually adopted by the Apostle. Paul he was also something of a pulse apprentice or intern or understudy in that way but one of the things about the true Son here is the imitation of character.

The faith of Timothy's grandmother and mother.

Love us Eunice. I had been reproduced in him and the Christian character and ministerial, character of the Apostle, Paul had also been reproduced in him. You can see the family resemblance as it were in how he ministered, and there's a sense in which all ministers, all elders should want to be true sons in the faith of Paul and Timothy that there's not just the following of a particular procedure in the church.

Order that there's not just the following of a particular set of moral rules in the morality that there's not just the following of a particular set of accurate doctrine, but that there is a character. There's a family resemblance in the type of man that they are. So Timothy a true son in the faith grace mercy and peace.

From God, our Father and Jesus Christ. Our Lord again. We see the Divinity of the Lord Jesus that as the Lord. And our God. But there's also the reminder here that God, the first person of the Trinity is described as father but not only father of Jesus. So that when Philip asks, Jesus, show us the Father, and as good enough.

And Jesus says, have I been to you with you so long and you still don't know me. He who has seen me. Has seen the father. Jesus doesn't just bear the family resemblance. He is one being of one substance with the Father so that when the second person becomes a man that is the full, not just perfectly accurate, but complete display of God, as can be made in a human being.

There is nothing unJesus. Like in God for us to see is all that we will ever see of God. Because God of course is invisible and infinitely glorious and we cannot lay our eyes upon the divinity. But Jesus is the perfect resemblance, but we are being conformed to his image when Jesus comes and says that he's going to His Father.

And our Father, he is describing how we have been by adoption brought into a renewal in bearing. The image of the Father through Jesus Christ. In fact, our image bearing through Jesus is greater than Adam's image bearing in his mere creation and so we say God our Father and Jesus Christ.

Our Lord. So really, it's not Paul's family resemblances. It that makes Timothy a true son. In the faith Paul's family resemblance comes from Christ's family. Resemblance, He's being conformed to Christ and so he writes in other places imitate me. As I imitate Christ. And so for all who are brought to true faith and Jesus Christ in the spirit is growing in faith.

All are being brought into this family resemblance. It's not just ministers who resemble this in their ministry, but all Christians will have a resemblance because the resemblance is that not only of the Lord Jesus but even an expression of the character of God in the Lord Jesus. So remember when we were going through the Ten Commandments and we kept saying about each one, as we traced, the root of, or the heart of the commandment to the creation to who God is and how he created us and whom he made us to be.

And we said these are all referring to the moral law. The applications of the implications of the character of God and the nature of man, and whom he made us to be to himself. And himself That, of course, we see most clearly most fully in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now in order for us to bear that family resemblance, We need God to give us and to commit all of who he is, for all of whom we need him to be to us so that we may be all that He has created and saved and called us to be for him And the word grace focuses.

Especially on all of who God is for all that. We lack. His grace is sufficient for us to strength is made, perfect and weakness by grace. You have been saved and that not of yourselves his righteousness being for us because we have nothing but sinfulness and guilt. And so the the word grace especially focuses on how all of the good and all of the strength is in God, but the word peace focuses on the other side.

How by God's making Himself everything for us that we lack and that we need. We actually have everything that we need. And so the word peace refers to that condition of being restored, and whole and healthy and good in every part of life. And the experience of peace is the experience of nothing at all being wrong.

And our emotional experience of that piece is not just circumstantial a in our situation, or in what we have are becoming like, and being made. Like but also personal knowing that providence is personal and that God having committed himself to us in this grace and making us depend not just dependent upon but to be fully helped by him in this grace, as a reminder, that God is for us that we who are enemies.

Now, have this friendship. This alliance we've brought been brought into a happy fellowship with God and that is a piece that war with anyone else. Can't take away. In fact, if you're at peace with God, whatever is at war with you, whether it be your sin or the devil or the world, It's days are numbered because the Alliance with God shall have, of course, the victory.

And so the word piece is full of meaning here. And usually, it's just grace and peace. And in Paul's writings, he reserves reserves grace, mercy and peace for the pastoral epistles about the word mercy, of course, referring to. Not just God showing pity and a being more kind to us.

Then is justly earned or deserved but especially remember the word mercy translates, sometimes the the word for steadfast love and it is the a focus on the relational aspect of God's in his grace being to us all we need. So that we may have we may have peace that it isn't just transactional but that it comes from love, it comes from affection a love and affection that we know begin outside of time which if it's outside a time how you there is no beginning had not beginning because it's from outside of time but a love and affection of course that is not changed by time.

And so there is this, there is this continual uninterrupted undecreasable love of God, that comes from all eternity. And the grace and the peace come to us in in that love. So very, very strong opening to the letter, but as we go through and as we see what Timothy is facing, I think we'll understand why that's needed.

But then reciprocal to that, If we know that this is, what is behind God's on guarding of doctrine guarding of morality and guarding of church order in his church. Then We don't see those things. As small things, it keeps us from being willing to compromise on accuracy of teaching, or on holiness of life, or on, or on proper order in the church.

Because these are things that come to us in the context of this intensely personal intensely triune intensely. The connected at its core to the saving work of Christ and intentionally intensely and eternally. Loving foundation comes to us, resting upon that. And therefore, it must not be compromised and let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your love for the church. And that we see that love especially in Christ's love for the church giving himself up for her and pouring out his spirit and calling in person His apostles whom he would give the great ministry of your spirit so that we might have portions of your scripture like 1st Timothy.

We thank you for the way he front-loaded it with a reminder of who you are and whom you have made yourself to be unto us. So that we may have you as our hope so that we may have you as our help. And so that we may be protected from how easily we grow weary or become willing to compromise.

We pray. Lord that you would give us eyes and mind and heart eyes of mind and heart for you yourself and how we function in your church. So that not only would you be our hope and our help but that you would be the knowledge of you and love for you and would be what seals us and strengthens us.

It makes us determined zealous and committed in our service of you. We do pray for our congregation that. What will be hearing about over these weeks and months in the pastoral epistles that you would bring it to a real and faithful expression in our church? And Lord not only in our congregation, but how desperately in the Reformed Presbyterian churches?

We have need of the kind of Reformation for which these letters were given and how desperately and the evangelical Church and your church as a whole worldwide. These things are needed. And so we pray for and you pouring out of your spirit. As we see that your church and earth has gone through seasons like this, and that you had made provision for it in advance.

We ask that by what you have provided you would come and you would do a renewed work in our own day. We ask it in Jesus name, Amen.