

Devotionals March 8 – April 7, 2022: Faithfulness to the Glorious Gospel – 1 & 2 Timothy

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As we ended our study of the book of Luke last month, Jesus had just ascended into heaven and left his disciples behind (empowered by his Spirit) to continue the work of establishing the early church. Now we fast-forward about thirty years to consider the two epistles that Paul wrote to Timothy. Churches had been established in many different cities by this time as a result of Paul's missionary journeys, but the church community as a whole was still relatively new and faced many threats from persecution, false teachers, and internal disputes. Paul is now an old man who has been imprisoned by the Roman government for his faith before and expects that it will happen again. As he nears the end of his life, he writes three last epistles—1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy. These epistles were addressed to specific individuals rather than an entire church. Timothy and Titus were both younger men who were emerging as leaders in the early church and needed further instruction and encouragement from their mentor, Paul.

Though Timothy was much younger than Paul, they clearly had a close relationship because Paul addresses him as “my own son in the faith” and “my dearly beloved son” at the beginning of both epistles. They were also partners in ministry. We read in Acts about Timothy accompanying Paul on missionary journeys and serving as Paul's scribe and cowriter for the books of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Evidently, Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to continue working in the church there while he went on to do further missionary work in Macedonia. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminds him of everything that he has taught him and gives further instruction on how to govern the church at Ephesus. As he writes his second letter, Paul's situation is very different. He is now in prison, facing death by execution. Although Paul desires to see his dear friend again before he dies, he is not sure that Timothy will be able to make it to Rome in time. He reflects on his own life and encourages this young leader to labor faithfully for the sake of the gospel even after he is gone.

Paul's instruction to Timothy in these letters was undoubtedly beneficial for him and the other leaders in the early church. They contain valuable instruction and encouragement for church leaders today as well. Those who have been chosen to govern the church have been entrusted with the “glorious gospel” just as Paul was (1 Tim. 1:11). This is a very serious responsibility that has eternal consequences. Do you regularly pray for the leaders of your church as they seek to carry out this weighty calling? Officebearers are responsible for making sure the truth is proclaimed to the congregation each week by means of faithful, gospel preaching. They are also responsible for rebuking false teachers who try to infect the church with heresy.

The other way that church leaders protect the truth of the gospel is by instructing the members of the church on how to live in a godly way that accords with this gospel. This instruction comes from the preaching and also from the godly example that officebearers set in their own lives. Additionally, they are responsible for using Christian discipline to correct those who are not living in accordance with the gospel. The preaching of the gospel and Christian discipline are referred to as the “keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16:19) because they are the means that God has given church leaders as his agents on this earth to open the kingdom of heaven to believers and shut out unbelievers. Since 1 & 2 Timothy contain so much instruction about church leadership and government, they (along with Paul's letter to Titus) are often referred to as the “pastoral epistles.”

At this point you may be wondering, “Why should I read these books of the Bible? I am not a leader in the church yet, and maybe I never will be.” First of all, we know from 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is profitable for every believer to read. Second, these two epistles do contain important truths for all believers, not just those in church leadership. It is vital for each member of the church to understand what proper biblical leadership looks like so they can be sure to attend

a local church where the leaders are faithful to the gospel. It is also essential for each member of the church to be able to identify the characteristics of false doctrine and false teachers for themselves. One who relies on others to tell them what is true and what is false can be easily led astray in their ignorance. And finally, every single church member can benefit from the instruction on how to live a godly life according to the truth of the gospel that is found in 1 & 2 Timothy. In gaining further understanding of these truths through studying the word and the work of the Spirit in your heart, you will grow in your personal faithfulness to the gospel and will be equipped to ensure that your church maintains faithfulness to the gospel as well.

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Date	Read	Study	Psalter
Mar. 8	1 Tim. 1:1–7	How were the false teachers that Paul warns about misusing the law of God?	248
Mar. 9	1 Tim. 1:8–11	What are the good purposes of God's law? (See also Ps. 19:7; Rom. 3:19–20; Gal. 3:24.)	250
Mar. 10	1 Tim. 1:12–17	How is the mercy and grace of God evident in your life? Does it lead you to praise?	252
Mar. 11	1 Tim. 1:18–20	How are faith and a good conscience key weapons for spiritual warfare? What happens to those who reject these things?	253
Mar. 12	1 Tim. 2:1–2	Why is it so important for you to pray for the civil authorities? Do you pray for them often?	255
Mar. 13	1 Tim. 2:3–8	Does verse 4 mean that God wants every single person to be saved? Why or why not? (See also Rom. 9:14–18; Eph. 1:1–12.)	259
Mar. 14	1 Tim. 2:9–15	How is the instruction for the conduct of women in the church here in stark contrast to modern feminist ideals?	260
Mar. 15	1 Tim. 3:1–7	What are the qualifications for elders listed here? Why are these qualifications necessary?	262
Mar. 16	1 Tim. 3:8–13	What are the qualifications for deacons listed here? Why are these qualifications necessary?	265
Mar. 17	1 Tim. 3:14–16	What did Paul want Timothy to learn from his letter according to these verses? Are you learning this in your study as well?	268
Mar. 18	1 Tim. 4:1–8	What type of false teaching is Paul warning Timothy about here? Can you think of a current-day example?	271
Mar. 19	1 Tim. 4:9–16	How can you be a godly example to others even in your youth as Timothy was called to be?	275

Mar. 20	1 Tim. 5:1–2	How can you treat both the older and younger members of your church with respect? (See also Phil. 2:1–4.)	280
Mar. 21	1 Tim. 5:3–16	What could you do to care for the widows in your own church?	286
Mar. 22	1 Tim. 5:17–25	What could you do to encourage the elders in your church?	289
Mar. 23	1 Tim. 6:1–5	What are some ways that one could misuse God's word while claiming to honor it?	290
Mar. 24	1 Tim. 6:6–10	Is the love of money a temptation for you? How can you cultivate an attitude of contentment?	297
Mar. 25	1 Tim. 6:11–16	Why is seeking to live a faithful, godly life such a struggle for the believer?	299
Mar. 26	1 Tim. 6:17–21	What are true riches as opposed to the riches that are merely of this world?	301
Mar. 27	2 Tim. 1:1–5	Why was the promise of life in Christ Jesus especially precious to Paul at this time? (See 2 Tim. 4:6.) Is it precious to you?	302
Mar. 28	2 Tim. 1:6–11	Where does the strength and courage needed to persevere through the hardships of the Christian life come from?	304
Mar. 29	2 Tim. 1:12–18	What gave Paul confidence and hope throughout the many afflictions he endured during his ministry?	305
Mar. 30	2 Tim. 2:1–7	What do a soldier, athlete, farmer, and minister have in common according to these verses?	306
Mar. 31	2 Tim. 2:8–13	How is the resurrection of Christ from the dead a key part of the believer's assurance?	307
Apr. 1	2 Tim. 2:14–19	What does a church do to root out an "infection" of false doctrine? What happens if it is left unchecked?	308
Apr. 2	2 Tim. 2:20–26	What is necessary for you to be a vessel of honor that is useful to God?	311
Apr. 3	2 Tim. 3:1–9	Why is it wise to "turn away" (v. 5) from false teachers rather than trying to engage with them?	315
Apr. 4	2 Tim. 3:10–17	How can you continue to grow in your knowledge of Scripture during your current season of life?	318
Apr. 5	2 Tim. 4:1–5	Does Paul's exhortation to Timothy here remind you of your own faithful pastor? What could you do to encourage him?	322

Apr . 6	2 Tim. 4:6–8	As you think about your own death someday, can you make the same confession of joy and hope as Paul did?	325
Apr . 7	2 Tim. 4:9–22	Have you ever been hurt physically or emotionally by people like Paul had? How do verses 17–18 give you hope and comfort in this situation?	334

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