

Paul's Urgent Charge to Timothy

Week 2

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:3-11

Sermon Series: *Timothy's Charge*

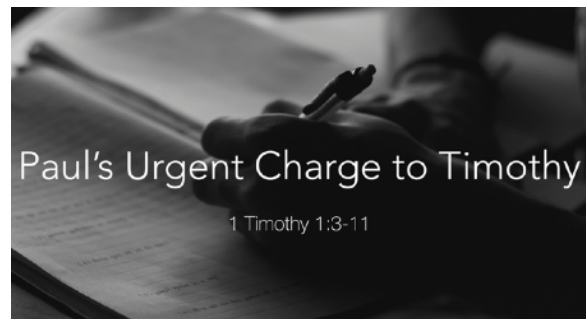
Topic: Paul, Timothy, Law

I. Introduction

Review

Last week we began a new series through Paul's first epistle to Timothy. We considered the first two verses, which helped us answer three questions; 1) Who is Paul, 2) What is an Apostle, and 3) Who is Timothy? Paul is an apostle by the command of God and he was personally sent out by the resurrected Jesus to proclaim his word among the Jews and Gentiles. Paul is Jesus' personally chosen spokesman to world on his behalf.

Timothy is Paul's personally chosen spokesman to the Christians at Ephesus. Timothy is to Paul what Paul is to Jesus. This letter is "Paul's Urgent Charge to Timothy." Paul likely wrote this letter around A.D. 64 while on his fourth mission journey. So we are about 30 years after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.



Overview

Today we will consider 1 Timothy 1:3-11, in which Paul explains the primary reasons for writing this letter. There are "certain persons" who are teachers in the church, who have deviated from Christ and are teaching different, distracting, and destructive doctrines. Pride has crept into their hearts and they are harming the church. Paul is charging Timothy to love this church and protect them from this harmful teaching and to correct these teachers who are in error.

II. Paul's Urgent Charge to Timothy (1:3-11)

After his doxological introduction, Paul immediately states his primary purpose in writing. From the first sentence of the body of this letter, we see three things; there is an *urgent* need, in the church in *Ephesus*, that requires a *charge*.

A. An Urgent Need

First, note the need is urgent.

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine...

1 Timothy 1:3 (ESV)

When I was going to Macedonia. Paul takes Timothy back to a time when the two of them were together. He brings up a previous conversation they'd had and now continues it in this letter. Paul had previously discussed with Timothy the needs of the church at Ephesus and had sent him there to address these needs. Paul now reminds Timothy of those needs and reaffirms his former instructions.

As I urged you. The word '*urged*' (*parakaleō παρακαλέω*) means, "to urge; to implore; to ask for or request earnestly; to encourage."¹ The need among the believers in Ephesus is *urgent*. The church was deeply important to Paul. There was within Paul a sense of urgency and seriousness that motivated him at first to speak with Timothy and then later to send him to this church, but that sense of urgency did not abate over time, and so now he writes a letter to Timothy to *encourage* him to finish the task for which Paul sent him there.

B. Remain at Ephesus (1:3)

This charge is directed at the church in Ephesus, which was a coastal city of Ionia, now present day Turkey. Paul founded this church on his second missionary journey and later lived in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31). He deeply loved this church (Acts 20:36).

The city of Ephesus was founded in the 10th century B.C. and was famously known as the home of the Temple of Artemis (a.k.a Diana), which was designated as one of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World."

Ephesus is one of the seven churches in Asia that is addressed by Jesus in the opening chapters of the book of Revelation. The apostle John lived his final days in this city and wrote the book of Revelation while in this city. Ephesus is the place of his tomb.



ESV Study Bible

¹ Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

C. Charge Certain Persons (1:3-11)

Paul issues a *charge* to Timothy. This ‘charge’ involves both positive and negative elements. Paul urges that two things *not* be done and three things ought to be done in the Ephesian church.

To charge certain persons. Paul uses this word ‘charge’ (*parangellō παραγγέλλω*) six times in this letter.² We find it here at the beginning—twice in this opening paragraph—of this letter and at the end (6:13, 17). The word can also be translated as “command.” It “is both a military and a legal term, describing a military command or an official summons to court.”³ The essential meaning of the word is to announce or direct with authority. Paul’s “charge” to Timothy is an urgent, pastoral commission to exercise authoritative oversight of the Christians in Ephesus. This church needs direction and guidance and Paul is *charging* Timothy to go and to give it.

“**Certain persons**” describes a group of unnamed people within the church who are teachers (v.7) and yet have begun to teach things contrary to the gospel. Paul will later name two of these (1:20) but the groups appears to be more than these two. These people and their deviant teaching are, in Paul’s mind, the source of greatest threat to the spiritual stability of the church. These false teachers must be dealt with and this is charge to which Paul is entrusting Timothy.

1. The Negative Charge (1:3-4)

That which Paul urges against are two, found in vs.3-4.

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

1 Timothy 1:3-4 (ESV)

a) **Not to teach any different doctrine** (v.3). The phrase “teach a different doctrine” translates one Greek word (*heterodidaskaleō ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω*), which is “a compound of two words, ἕτερος, ‘other,’ and διδασκαλεῖν, ‘to teach,’ apparently coined here by Paul.”⁴ The word appears in the NT only here and again at the end of this letter (6:3). The word means “to teach doctrines contrary to an accepted standard.”⁵ What is that “accepted standard?” Paul answers this in the final chapter as anything that “...does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness...” (1 Tim 6:3). We know from Luke that the early

² 1 Timothy 1:3, 18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17.

³ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 18.

⁴ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 19.

⁵ Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching.”⁶ Thus, the words of Jesus as taught by the apostles, is the foundational doctrine of the Christian church. Paul charges Timothy to see to it that no one teaches anything different from what Jesus taught and the apostles affirmed and explained.

b) *Nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations* (v.4).

The *myths* of Paul’s day were the fables and fanciful tales related to Greek gods and their immoral behavior. These were not only false, but were dangerous because they were often used to justify sexual immorality.

The *genealogies* were particularly problematic for Jewish teachers who may have aimed to support their own privileged position by grounding their rank and station in birth records. These are *endless* in that they consume time and are open to rampant manipulation.

The problem with both of these is that they led to nothing more than *speculations*. There is nothing certain about them, but rather they lead to unfruitful doubts, “what ifs,” and uncertainty. Paul tells Timothy to charge these persons *not* to be *devoted* to these unhelpful pursuits.

The word “*devoted*” means, and “to be addicted to; to cling to”⁷ and “to pay close attention to... [by] responding conformity.”⁸ Evidently these “certain persons” had been devoting themselves to these things. This means they were paying such deep attention to these errors that it was corrupting their formerly godly behavior. The time they spent in these unfruitful myths, genealogies, and speculations were drawing them away from Christ, and closer to destruction. They were in need of someone to charge them to change both their belief and their behavior.

Summary. The two negative aspects of Timothy’s charge are to 1) warn against teaching a different doctrine and 2) against devoting oneself to unfruitful myths, endless genealogies, and uncertain speculations.

2. The Positive Charge (1:4-b-11)

There are three positive aspects of Timothy’s charge. The first is to charge the church to pursue the stewardship of faith, to love, and to pursue sound doctrine.

a) *The stewardship from God that is by faith* (v.4). The word “*stewardship*” means, “administration, household management, or household plan.” Paul uses it several times to refer to his own role and responsibility within God’s plan of salvation.⁹ Paul was sent by Jesus to proclaim the truth of the gospel that is granted “*by faith*.” God’s great plan of salvation was

⁶ Acts 2:42.

⁷ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 20.

⁸ Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

⁹ See 1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 3:2; Colossians 1:25.

that it would be given through faith in Jesus. The purpose of leaders in Christ's church is to strengthen the faith of God's people. These while the false teachers were doing the exact opposite. They were destroying faith by promoting "speculations." Thus, Paul is instructing Timothy to charge this church to pursue God through the stewardship of faith, not the unholy trinity of spiritual instability; speculations, myths, and endless genealogies—all of which weaken and destroy faith. Paul now provides a counterbalance to these three sources of doubt and by pointing to a kind of trinity of spiritual stability.

b) *Love that issues from a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith* (v.5).

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 1 Timothy 1:5 (ESV)

The aim of this charge entrusted to Timothy is *love*. Timothy is to love these people. He is to be motivated by genuine love. The church is the bride of Christ. Thus all who are leaders in the church must love the church because Jesus loves his church. The love that Paul is describing to Timothy is a love that flows from " *a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.*" All three are necessary qualities for the right kind of church leader.

First, the person must be "*pure of heart.*" He must love righteousness to core of his being. A pure heart is singularly and wholly focused on one thing and not many. A pure heart has no room for multiple loves, but rather is exclusively in love with Christ!

He must have a "*good conscience.*" This means his outward actions are in accord with his inward affections. He is not be a hypocrite. He is a man of integrity. He is faithful and his own inward assessment of his own motives and actions do not condemn him.

And he must maintain a "*sincere faith.*" Church leaders cannot doubt the faith they proclaim. They must genuinely believe the tenants of the faith. They must inwardly trust the doctrine they outwardly teach. When all of these three things cohere—a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith—then, love will be the overflow out of which the truly helpful church leader ministers among the church.

The Consequences of Swerving Hearts

Paul has positively stated the importance of the love that flows from these three things, but he now reminds Timothy of the consequences of failing to maintain them.

⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. 1 Timothy 1:6-7 (ESV)

These "*certain persons,*" who are causing problems in the church in Ephesus have "*swerved*" from "*a pure heart, good conscience and a sincere faith.*" They turned from them ever so slightly and yet this slight swerve then led to longer "*wandering away.*"

After swerving and wandering, they then landed in “*vain discussion*” or “empty talk.” When the heart is devoid of love, the words of the mouth are empty and unhelpful. When you do not truly love, your words are empty and hallow.

When the heart is devoid of love of others (ie. Christ’s church), then love of self begins to rise. Pride has risen up within them. The swerving hearts of these false teachers led them to “*desiring to be teachers of the law*.” Their loveless hearts expressed themselves in self-exaltation. They wanted to be “*teachers of the law*” because they enjoyed the praise and respect of the people. A heart this is not filled with love for Christ will be filled with love of self.

Even though they “*did not understand what they were saying*,” nevertheless they still “*made confident assertions*.” The fact that they had no true understanding of the law did not prevent them from being confident teachers. Some people can be completely wrong and yet confidently assured they are right. Being confident you’re right when you’re actually wrong is dangerous. In the case of these false teachers, they were wrong about the purpose of the law.

c) *Sound doctrine* (v.10). The pursuit of sound doctrine is the the third positive aspect of Timothy’s charge, which to *rightly understand the law and properly praise the gospel*. The word “*sound*” could be translated as “healthy.” Paul charges Timothy to maintain sound, healthy doctrine. This is expressed in an incorrect understanding of the purpose of the law (v.8-11) and the glory of the gospel (v.11).

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane... 1 Timothy 1:8-9 (ESV)

1) *The purpose of the law* (v.8-11). Paul states that “*the law is good if it is used lawfully*” (v.8). The “*understanding*” that is essential in regard to the law is that it is “*laid down not for the just but for the lawless and disobedient*” (v.9). The law is *not* a means of attaining righteousness or establishing righteousness. The purpose of the law is not to be a standard of self-attained righteousness. The law is not for righteous people. Rather, The purpose of the law is expose sin and reveal that *righteousness in the sight of God does not come by keeping the law* for, as Jesus said, “*No one keeps the law.*”¹⁰ Paul explains this.

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.
Romans 3:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁰ John 7:19.

The purpose of the law is to expose the sinfulness of man and prove that every human being is guilty before God. No human being will ever be good enough, through his own good deeds—or law keeping, to earn the right to eternal life. The law exposes the sin the hearts of every one of us. This is why Paul essentially restates the 10 Commandments.

⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine...

1 Timothy 1:9-10 (ESV)

This covers every one of us. Paul notes that more could be added to this list (“...and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine”), but these should suffice to reveal that all of us have fallen short of God’s standards.

	10 Commandments	Paul
1	No god but Me	Ungodly and sinners
3	No profane use of my name	Unholy and profane
5	Honor father and mother	Strike fathers and mothers
6	No murder	Murderers
7	No adultery	Sexually immoral; practice homosexuality
8	No stealing	Enslavers (“man stealers”)
9	No false witness	Liars, perjurers

Have you ever worshiped (ie. Valued) another god above the one true and living God? Have you ever profaned God’s name in a any way? Have you ever dishonored your parents? Have you ever taken a life? Or been sexually immoral, whether that be through heterosexual or homosexual sin? Have you ever stolen anything? Or have you ever lied? If the answer is yes to any one of those, then we all stand in the same place; we’re all guilty in the sight of God.

We must understand the purpose of the law. It is not intended to establish righteousness but rather to expose sin. Righteousness does not come by keeping the law because no one can perfectly keep the law. The law reveals the sin of everyone so that we will see our need of a perfect Savior. This hard truth then pushes us to glory in the gospel.

- 2) *The gospel of a glorious and glad God* (v.11). Sound doctrine is everything that “*accords with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which*” Paul has been entrusted. What is the gospel?

The gospel (ie. “good news”) is that God created the world and mankind, whom he invited into his joyful presence. However, our first parents were lazy and willfully deceived and rejected God’s goodness, choosing death instead. As a result, we were then cut off from His good and joyful presence. But God in his great mercy was unwilling to allow us to remain cut off from him. So he sent his only Son, Jesus, to secure our freedom from death by himself dying on our behalf. He died and then on the third day rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God where He now promises to give life—both now and forever—to all who will look to him in faith and receive His Holy Spirit, who will help us to live in holiness now and hereafter enter into the joyful presence of God, forever!

Why is God glorious? One answer is because God planned the gospel.¹¹ As Paul wrote in the opening words of this letter, God is “our Savior.” In the face of our insane rebellion, God chose to be gracious. God chose to offer good news to us who were condemned under bad news. But a second reason God is glorious is because the God who invites us into his presence is “*the blessed God*” (v.11). The word ‘blessed’ here is (μακάριος, *makarios*) and it means, “pertaining to being happy, with the implication of enjoying favorable circumstances.”¹² This is the same word Jesus uses repeatedly in the Beatitudes (Mt 5), which can be translated as either “blessed” or “happy.” Paul is saying that God is a happy God. God is full of joy and the gospel is that God invites us into his happiness and joy through faith in Jesus. This word does not refer to a fleeting or fickle kind of feeling, but rather to an abiding and enduring condition. Paul uses this same word at the end of this letter to describe Jesus at his second coming (6:13). It is the same word used to describe those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9). This joyful state of blessing is the very goodness that permeates the whole kingdom of God and all who enter into his presence, as Jesus promised his faithful servants saying, “*Well done! Enter into the joy of your master*” (Mt 25:21, 23).

III. Conclusion

So what are we to take from this. What truths need our urgent attention.

1. ***Every church must be prepared for the presence of false teachers.*** Despite our best efforts fake Christians will find their way into every church. Among those who are true, will always

¹¹ Mark 1:14; Romans 1:1; 15:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 8-9; 1 Peter 4:17.

¹² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 301.

be those who are false. We must be ready to deal with this situation. Even among the 12 Disciples there was one devil.

2. ***We must not wander from apostolic doctrine.*** We must stay true the doctrine taught by the apostles and never deviate from it. Christ's church must remain faithful to the teachings of Christ and his apostles. We must beware of theological innovations. We cannot embrace any doctrine not grounded in God's revealed word as expounded through Christ Jesus and his chosen apostles.
3. ***We must not be devoted to anything that causes us to doubt the faith.*** We must avoid devotion to myths and fanciful stories. We need to turn away from endless scrolling. We must evaluate the helpfulness of the all in our lives that lead us into nothing but speculations. We must ask ourselves if endless hours on the internet is strengthening our faith or stimulating doubts? Does curious speculation foster faith or cause to falter? To what are you devoting your time? No matter what—or who—it is, if it does not strengthen your faith in the resurrected and reigning Jesus, then you need to put it away.
4. ***We must aim for love from pure hearts, good consciences, and sincere faith.*** In all we do, we must do it in love. Not just any kind of love, but love that comes from a pure heart and a good conscience. This means that love that is helpful and fruitful is first engaged in self-analysis. Only he can truly love who first examines his own heart and purifies it of all falsehood and pride and all impurities. He only can truly love who first asks himself, "Is my conscience clean?" If we will love others truly, we must first examine ourselves deeply.
5. ***We must understand that righteousness does not come from keeping the law.*** No one earns eternal life. No one does enough good deeds to say to God, "I deserve salvation." The perfect law of God proves who absolutely imperfect we are. God's law is good, and it must be obeyed, but keeping it will not be the means by which anyone is saved.
6. ***Righteousness comes from delighting in the great glory of a glad God!*** God is glorious because he planned the gospel. He planned to save us through the glorious grace shown to us through the willing self-sacrifice of his only Son, Jesus. Jesus, "for the joy set before him,"¹³ gladly endured the shame and suffering of the cross so that he could save all who sought above all else to enter into the happy kingdom of God the Father through faith in him!

¹³ Hebrews 12:2.

IV. Discussion Questions (1 Timothy 1:3-11)

1. Why did Paul urge Timothy to “remain at Ephesus?” What is urgent about this message?
2. What are contemporary examples of “myths, endless genealogies, and speculations?” (v.4)
3. What did Paul “charge” Timothy to do? (1 Tim 1:3, 5)
4. How would you define “the stewardship from God that is by faith?” (v.4)
5. Where does vain discussion (ie.empty talk) come from? (v.5-6)
6. What is purpose of the law?
7. What is “sound doctrine” or “healthy teaching?” (v.10)
8. What is the gospel? How would you explain it to an unbelieving coworker? (v.11)
9. What does Paul mean when he refers to God as “the blessed God?” (v.11)