**LESSON SIXTEEN - 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus**

Pastoral Epistles

**Purpose of the letters:** To pastor the "pastors," addressing concerns of pastors. In this sense they are unique in the N.T.

* The first letter to Timothy was written from Macedonia while Paul was still free. Timothy is in Ephesus.
* 2 Timothy was written from prison in Rome, just before Paul's execution and is most personal, expressing his loneliness, and strong desire for Timothy to come,
* Titus was written from Nicopolis (Tit. 3:12) to the church in Crete.

**1 and 2Timothy**

These two books are personal pastoral letters to Timothy. Timothy was a young man who lived in Lystra with his mother and grandmother. He was probably converted during Paul's first missionary journey. He was the son of a mixed marriage, his father a Gentile, his mother a Jew. He was not like Paul - not courageous, needed lots of encouragement, not constitutionally strong. Paul, in contrast, was very brave, tougher to kill than a cat, lots of stamina. The two became very close, like father and son.

Timothy must have matured spiritually very quickly. He went along on the second missionary journey, was left behind in Berea with Silas to mentor the new Christians there (Acts 16 & 17). He was sent to Thessalonica when Paul was worried about the new believers there. He was also sent to Ephesus to pastor the church - a large one (made up of house churches) - organizing leadership, choosing elders, solving problems, fighting heresies. He was sent to Corinth to try and sort out the personal problems between Paul and the Corinthians.

Timothy was Paul's trouble-shooter, his main disciple. Paul relied on Timothy to carry on his ministry after he was gone.

**1 Timothy**

**The Situation:** Timothy wasin Ephesus, pastoring the new believers. False teachers were threatening the church’s health and stability (Acts 20:28-32) so Paul refers several times to being aware of their undermining influence on the church (1Tim. 1:3-7, 18-20).

First Timothy is not primarily a book on church governance and gender issues. It a personal, passionate entreaty advocating continuing to proclaim the Good News, nurturing the new life found in Christ, and protecting the flock from false teaching that would both decimate the church and its witness to the surrounding culture. Paul is encouraging Timothy in his development as a leader.

**States his purposes**:

1 Tim. 1:5 – that believers will love one another, flowing out of purity, and faith in a simple gospel. To pastor people is to love people.

To be a Shepherd means loving, protecting, nurturing, feeding flock.

1. Encourage prayer and worship (1Tim. 2:1-7)
   1. Intercession: God’s heart is that all be saved, and prayer is the key to success in anything we do.
      1. Note especially Paul’s urging prayer for government. Think about the Roman rulers of the time who had martyred so many already. He knows the influence of government on spread of the gospel, can hinder or provide greater access.
   2. Worship - pure worship is the issue, without distractions. Paul is concerned with sensitivity to what is appropriate culturally – don’t throw up barriers to the gospel:
      * in unity - 2:8
      * in modesty (not drawing attention to oneself, which distracts others from focusing their hearts and minds on God) - 2:9
      * women ruling over men - 2:11

Discuss alternate interpretations: (see Study Bible notes)

* Universal: this would be inconsistent with Paul’s teaching elsewhere, and letters including greetings to women who held prominent positions within the church.
* Polemical – this particular situation. Possible the Ephesian women were caught up in the false teaching, which appears to have been disrupting family life (2:15, 3:4-5, 5:13-15) and so should not be allowed to teach
* Cultural: assumes a patriarchal society, and a sensitivity to women’s roles in the culture of the day.

**Question: However you understand the issue of women’s role in the church, is the question of women in leadership is separate issue from women in ministry?**

(Good exegetical study: Why Not Women : A Biblical Study of Women in Missions, Ministry, and Leadership by Loren Cunningham, David Joel Hamilton and Janice Rogers (Aug 1, 2000)

1. Good leadership essential for a growing church. The strength of a church is parallel to strength of its leaders (1Tim. 3).

* Potential leaders were all relatively new Christians
* Paul chose leaders from within the local body, did not import from outside – people known by the body and accountable to the other believers.
* List of qualities in Bethel notes p. 154

**Question: What is notable about the ones mentioned?**

1. Combating false teaching – Paul has scathing commentary on those responsible
   1. Ultimate source is the devil himself 1 Tim 4:1
   2. People who teach thus have no conscience, are arrogant 1 Tim 4:2.
   3. Claim their thinking is super-Christian, actually is un-biblical, opposed to the gospel, a distortion of it – a reversion to legalism.
   4. Focus of this teaching seems to have been philosophical, focused on legalism (1:6-7). Perhaps asceticism – don’t marry, don’t eat certain foods (4:3-5)

Sums up his instructions with 4:9-10 – go back to the simple gospel: our hope is in Christ Jesus alone.

**How should we respond?** Paul’s instructions:

* Outside the church, ignore them. You can spend all your time reading, discussing their arguments.
* Instead, train yourself in godliness. 1 Tim 4:7b. The best counter to false teachers is a godly life.
* Be a light rather than attacking darkness. Set an example. 1 Tim 4:12, 15.

1. Practical caring for people - 5:1f.
   1. How to relate to the ‘flock’ – older and younger women, older and younger men: like family;
   2. Care for those without family - widows

Recognising the limited resources of the church, Paul gives instruction on who should receive help and who shouldn’t. The church would be solely responsible for caring for people who are destitute, as there was no social netting, as in many countries today. The family has primary responsibility. Also related to the widow’s service to others/ ministry.

* 1. Respecting elders: Paul was sensitive to the situation into which he was putting Timothy, a young man as the key leader, with elder people in the fellowship. Gain wisdom from them.

**Question: How can we contextualise Paul’s instructions to our day and culture?**

1. Leadership questions:
   1. Charges against leadership - must be substantiated (5:19-22)
   2. Don't be quick to multiply leadership – 5:22
   3. Pay leaders – 5:18
   4. Warning against false teachers 6:3-10,
2. Paul’s benediction: 1 Tim 6:11-16 Wonderful encouragement and reminder of what is most important.

**2 Timothy**

Paul's last will and testament - knows he won't be coming out of prison this time (this is a 2nd imprisonment after Acts 28), a more personal farewell to his spiritual son.

1. **Paul gives seven keys to unlocking riches we have in Christ**:
2. Hold fast to the truth - emphasis on being a good soldier - care about what is truth (2 Tim 1:13-14)
3. Be strong in Christ (2:1) - "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me". Confidence, trust, victory, faith.
4. Endure suffering as a good soldier - in the trenches (3:12). Courage is not being without fear, but obeying orders in spite of fear. Amy Carmichael: "He cannot have travelled far who bears no scar."

There is inevitable suffering for the Christian, at times *because* we're Christians. Paul keeps coming back to suffering, urging Timothy to not be afraid, to be ready, to persevere through it, even to death – a message we need to hear today!

1. Don't get entangled in the things of this world (2:4). Don't be distracted by things that have no eternal value e.g. materialism, self-improvement, status, "self-fulfillment"

**Question: What are the distractions for believers in our culture?**

1. Be diligent – uses metaphors of farmer, athlete (2:5-6) - through perseverance, training.
2. Be patient – (4:2-5) Sow the seed and some will respond. Don't be discouraged! Be faithful!
3. Entrust the message to faithful disciples (2:2). **Question:Are we focused on making converts (followers), or disciples? What is the difference?**

Paul > Tim > faithful men > others - generations of disciples. Always take someone younger in the Lord with you into ministry situations - train someone to take over your job, disciple: pass on who Christ is in you to others.

**B. Even in prison, Paul is free - Reasons for his freedom:**

1. Has a clear conscience (4:7-8) At the end of your life how will you feel about how you've invested your life ("Wish I'd spent more time at the office?")
2. Has passed on the gospel - knows his ministry won't die with him 2Tim 2:9; 4:16-17
3. Joy in knowing it’s time for his departure, anticipating being with the Lord - 4:6f.

Ends with a personal note:

Asks for some personal things – his cloak, "Above all the parchments" and urges Timothy to come quickly.

**Titus**

Titus is not mentioned in Acts. Fully Greek, he was the test case for Paul’s argument that Gentiles did not have to become Jews when they became followers of Jesus.

* He points out that Titus, who accompanied Paul and Barnabus to Jerusalem, was not required to be circumcised by the Jerusalem Council (Gal. 2:2-4), clarifying the position of the non-Jewish Christians.
* He was sent to Corinth after Timothy failed to restore Paul's relationship with the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:6,16,23; 7:6f; 12:18).
* He was also sent to Crete to consolidate the work there, and develop local leadership.

Ch. 1: Material similar to that in Paul’s letters to Timothy - reference to leadership questions. Highest caliber of people should be leaders - people don't rise above their leaders. Watch for rebellious people who try to become leaders (Wanting to be elder, but not member). Emphasis on what's done rather than what's said.

Ch. 2 - Defines sound doctrine (2:1-10). Not systematic theology, but deeds. Same response when John the Baptist sent to question whether or not Jesus was the Messiah - pointed to deeds, not credentials. Motives for holding sound doctrine:

1. Opponents put to shame - 2:8

2. Glorify God - makes Him attractive -2:10

3. Hope for Christ's return - 2:13

Ch. 3 - Insist on these things (continues from Ch 2, emphasis that right belief leads to a godly life - 2:15, 3:8)

Christian living ; discipline those who refuse to listen (3:10) and want to argue. Arguing consumes so much time and energy, and distracts from God’s purpose, destroying unity, rather than living an exemplary and appealing Christian life.

Paul is giving practical, powerful advice for pastors. These letters are different in character from his words to the whole church. He is pastoring his pastors.