

1 TIMOTHY 1:18-20

INTRODUCTION

Last week: 1 Tim 1:12-17, one great theme: Why God saved Paul.

This week: 1 Tim 1:18-20 - **Paul's charge to Timothy** - gives a fascinating insight to work Paul wants Timothy to do, and what is currently going on in Ephesus. Probable situation: Timothy come, done some investigation, seen where problem is, but feels out of his depth, so appeals to Paul to help sort it out, which he does through letter, strengthening Timothy, naming culprits. 3 sections/ themes:

- i) Timothy's call.
- ii) Timothy's fight.
- iii) Timothy's preservation.

1. TIMOTHY'S CALL

Before Paul reminds Timothy of what he needs to do - wage the good warfare - takes him back to beginning - to when first called. Paul's point: not asking you to do anything new, you must fulfil what God has marked you out to do from the beginning. Timothy been in ministry some 15 years.

Something significant happened when Timothy set apart - accompanied by prophecies. 1 Tim 4:14 Q1. Why was Timothy's call to ministry such a significant event in gospel history? (Acts 16:1-10)

Modern view of NT prophecy: vague and contains partial truth, but in NT prophecy has huge significance - you see that with prophecies given concerning Timothy - come at important point in spread of gospel. Timothy was first Gentile preacher - father a Greek (v1) - fact everyone knew (v3), he was uncircumcised - even though mother Jewish, he been recognised & treated as a Gentile.

Gospel is about to move into Europe: v6-10. Up until this point Paul has been in Asia in OT area, but by moving into Europe he is moving into new world. Even in best years of OT (David & Solomon) all influence was in East - now God's dealings with world will break out into West and into Greece.

The next great shift from old to new is taking place, gospel about to break free. Timothy's calling was very significant event - no wonder his ordination was surrounded by prophecy.

[Aside: look through NT, find all examples of NT prophecy recorded for us - to do with key developments in spread of gospel - e.g. Paul going to Jerusalem & his rejection by Jewish authorities.]

Lesson to Timothy now: these utterances still have relevance, God called you because as part of his plan to take gospel to all nations - do not give up now because going is difficult. God would be with him. Timothy's "package" of responsibilities from beginning includes tackling false teachers.

Lesson for all who would be involved with ministry: a confirmed call is essential for perseverance!

2. TIMOTHY'S FIGHT

So, what is it that Timothy has to do? - obviously needs strength & persistence to accomplish. v18.

Fight, wage warfare - very emotive words. Some of us born fighters, others prefer a quiet life - guess Timothy preferred a quiet life, but here he was being called to battle for sake of gospel & good of church. Too dangers to avoid: i) not fighting when we should be, ii) fighting over wrong things.

Q2. What do we need to make sure we fight the right things? v19 Gives us some direction: 'holding faith and a good conscience' - this phrase is deceptively comprehensive - because contains what is *objectively* and *subjectively* necessary. Objectively: the faith. If we too fight well must have a solid grasp of the objective content of our faith, the essentials of gospel - 'sound doctrine' - 1:10

Lesson: Must have a good grasp of Bible doctrine. Must know what believe and why believe it - and must be able to explain it from the Bible. Must know about God, Christ, doctrine of salvation, Holy Spirit, Church - and all from Bible. Sound doctrine that leads to right conduct. Apply: Great problems in Evangelicalism today are ignorance & immaturity - quickly leads people to fight for wrong things.

Apply: whatever we believe must be rooted in scripture, not just what we been taught is right - or else we will fight for our understanding or tradition, rather than 'the faith' with objective routes in Bible.

Subjectively: good conscience. Back 1:5 referred to having a good conscience - a conscience that is healthy - working properly - equipped by sound doctrine. It also needs to be a clear conscience! - 3:9

3. TIMOTHY'S PRESERVATION

Matter of conscience - very important. Q3. Where may a rejection of a 'good conscience' end up? v19 ESV very good here because highlights what false teachers have rejected - it is one thing and not two - they have rejected 'a good conscience' - this has led them to shipwreck their faith. A good conscience comes from sound doctrine - 1:5, but the key to keeping 'the faith' is a good conscience. Calvin: "A bad conscience is mother of all heresies." When morals slip, doctrine ebbs and the fight is soon lost.

What will preserve Timothy to battle on right issues will be his conscience. He is going to have to upset some people, goes with job of being a Pastor - but he must make sure he is right with God.

Whatever anyone else is calling him to do he must remain loyal to Christ, his doctrine and commands.

Apply: we must cultivate a good conscience and live with a clear conscience, because this is the mother of a sound faith and wherewithal to fight the good fight. It will keep you from a shipwreck.

He names 2 of shipwrecks: 'Hymenaeus & Alexander' - sadly they were not last Christian leaders who through stubborn disobedience shipwrecked their faith, ruined their ministry, done harm to Christ.

Q4. What does it mean to 'hand someone over to Satan'? v20, 1 Corinthians 5:5

By handing them over to prince of this world, setting them adrift and depriving them of spiritual support - so they will come to their senses & repent. Not consign them to hell. Aim is to shame them to repentance. Must realise how serious their sin is. Paul's ultimate aim is restoration: v20b.

CONCLUSION Timothy must remember his call & persevere in the work, fighting the battle, holding the faith and a good conscience. These must be our priorities if we going to endure to end.

Questions for 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Wednesday 12 February 03

1. What should our priorities in prayer be according to v1-3?
2. What is God's attitude towards outsider according to v4-6?
3. What was Paul's attitude towards outsiders according to v7?