

## 1 Timothy 1:1

### Introduction

1. Today we are beginning our study of 1 Timothy which is one of three letters by Paul referred to as the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)
  - a. They are referred to as the Pastoral Epistles because they were written by Paul to two of his young disciples, Timothy and Titus, with instructions for shepherding (or pastoring) the churches at Ephesus and Crete
  - b. These two men were not only traveling companions of Paul's, but fellow ministers who served not only along side him but often in his absence
  - c. The letters cover everything from dealing with doctrine and false teaching, the appointment of elders and deacons, general conduct for believers, care and respect for the elderly, and even warnings about the love of money and wealth
2. These are the last of Paul's epistles written shortly before His death:
  - a. It is generally accepted that 1 Timothy was written by Paul shortly after his release from his first Roman imprisonment (end of Acts)
  - b. Because of the similarities between 1 Timothy and Titus, it is also believed that Titus was written about the same time
  - c. 2 Timothy was written during Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Roman imprisonment shortly before he was martyred
  - d. This means all three letters would have been written somewhere in the early to mid 60s AD
3. One of the values in studying these letters is that it teaches us about the critical importance of the local church (e.g. body of believers) and what our primary functions should be:
  - a. The local church is supposed to be a place that promotes and teaches sound doctrine, but rejects and refutes false teaching
  - b. The local church is supposed to be a place that encourages behavior that honors Jesus Christ and discourages behavior that dishonors Him
  - c. It is also supposed to be a place where believers care for one another, especially the elderly and those who cannot care for themselves

A. The first thing I want us to notice is this: Paul knew exactly who he was and he defined it by his relationship and service to Jesus Christ (1:1)

1. With the exception of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians, Paul began each of his letters with the same declaration: He was an apostle: (READ 1:1a): "**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...**"
  - a. This is the most frequent title Paul applies to himself
  - b. When we think of the word apostle, we immediately think of Jesus' twelve apostles: people like Peter, James, John, Matthew, etc.
  - c. However, the word is also used of others in the New Testament including James, the brother of Jesus, Barnabas, Silas and others (Galatians 1:19; Acts 14:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:1 & 2:6-7)
  - d. So, what does it mean to be an apostle?
    - 1) In the simplest sense the word means to be a messenger:
      - a) Technically, it is someone who is sent out with a message

- b) It's used in this general sense sometimes in the NT, and is even used of Jesus Himself as One sent from God (Hebrews 3:1): **"Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—Jesus"**
- 2) However, most of the time apostle is used in the NT in a more formal sense and it appears there were two requirements to be considered an apostle in this way:
  - a) The first is that they had to have seen Jesus after His resurrection from the dead
  - b) The second is that they had to have been specifically chosen and commissioned into formal ministry by Jesus to preach and testify that He is the One who has been appointed by God to judge the living and the dead
  - c) These are two of the criteria that Peter and the other Apostles used to replace Judas (Acts 2:15-26)
  - d) We also see these requirements in Acts 10:40-42 (READ)
  - e) Not everyone who saw Jesus after His resurrection (500 according to 1 Corinthians 15:6) were called to formal serve in this capacity, but rather only a select handful
- 3) Paul met both of these qualifications and they happened simultaneously at his conversion: he both saw the resurrected Jesus and was specifically chosen by Him to preach and testify about Him (READ Acts 9:1-16)
- 2. Paul did not view his role as an apostle to be a choice, but rather an act of obedience to the Lord's command (READ 1:1b): **"according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope"**
  - a. In five of his other letters Paul states that he was an apostle **"by the will of God"** (1 & 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, & 2 Timothy)
  - b. God's will is synonymous with His commands, and here Paul states that he was an apostle because both God and Jesus Christ commanded it
  - c. Did you ever notice at Paul's conversion in Acts 9 Jesus never asked him if he wanted to be an apostle or to preach the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles? (READ Acts 9:1-16)
    - 1) Jesus didn't ask Paul if he wanted a career change: "Hey Saul, Jesus here. Just wondering how that pharisee thing is working out? Ever consider a career in apostleship?"
    - 2) Rather, regarding Paul's future, Jesus told Ananias, **"he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel..."** (Acts 9:15)
    - 3) And then, for good measure Jesus added, **"for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."** (Acts 9:16)
    - 4) If we jump down to verse 19b-20, we see that Paul took the charge to heart and immediately—after just a few days—started proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues around Jerusalem declaring that, **"He [Jesus] is the Son of God"** (Acts 9:20)
  - d. Years later when Paul was recounting his conversion to King Agrippa he said, **"So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the regions of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance"** (Acts 27:19-20)—as a side note, notice how Paul's comment here regarding repentance and turning to God aligns with Acts 10 above and the apostles testifying about Jesus being the judge of the living and the dead?

3. Takeaway: Paul knew exactly who he was, an apostle—one sent out by Jesus with the message of the Gospel; so my question is, Who are we? How do we identify ourselves?
  1. The mission of the Church—that’s you and me as believers—is to take the message of the Gospel into all the earth and make disciples
  2. Matthew, Mark and Luke all end with Jesus commanding His disciples to go out and be His witnesses—His messengers—to the world
  3. We may not all be apostles, pastors, or teachers; we may not each be a gifted evangelist; but, we are called to be witnesses, His messengers; THAT is our identity
  4. So, how do we do that? Aside from a full-blown Gospel presentation there are at least five things we can do:
  5. Turn to Colossians 4:2-6 (READ):
    - a. #1: We should actively pray for God to open doors, for others and ourselves
    - b. #2: We should be wise and take advantage of any opportunities God gives us, no matter how small
    - c. #3: We should exercise grace (unmerited favor) when responding to the unsaved
  6. Turn to 1 Peter 3:15-16 (READ):
    - a. This is in the context of suffering, but Peter’s instruction easily applies to all of life
    - b. He calls on his readers to do two things, and they are related:
      - 1) #4: We should sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts—e.g. make Him the most important part of our lives, and others should see this about us!
      - 2) #5: We should be ready to give an account—an answer, explanation—for the hope that we have within us
      - 3) This leads to a second thing we learn in Paul’s introduction

B. Paul was consumed by this hope of salvation (1:1b)
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1. Look back at how he referred to God and Jesus (1b)
2. He could have simply said, “according to the commandment of God and Christ Jesus”
3. Instead, he gave them titles:
  - a. **“God our Savior”:**
    - 1) This is interesting because there are only eight times in the NT where God the Father is specifically referred to as our Savior
    - 2) Almost all of these are by Paul (six of the eight) in the pastoral epistles—I want to just read some of these:
      - a) 1 Timothy 2:3-4: **“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**
      - b) 1 Timothy 4:10: **“For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”**
      - c) Titus 3:4-7: **“4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”**

- 3) It's not all that surprising that Paul would refer to God as our Savior because this is directly out of the Old Testament:
    - a) In 2 Samuel 2 David praised the Lord saying, **"He said, 'The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; 3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence.'"**
    - b) In Psalm 17:7 he wrote, **"I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech. 7 Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand From those who rise up against them."**
    - c) The book of Isaiah refers to God as Israel's savior repeatedly including the Lord saying to Israel, **"...there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior..."** (Isaiah 45:21) and **"...I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer..."** (Isaiah 49:26 & 60:16)
  - 4) Even Mary, Jesus' mother, referred to God as her savior (Luke 1:47): **"And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."**
- b. **"Jesus our Hope"**
- 1) When Paul refers to Jesus here as our hope he's not referring to wishful thinking, or even an earthly hope
  - 2) Rather, he's referring to the assurance of eternal salvation we have in Jesus Christ; He is our hope of being resurrected:
    - a) In Colossians 1:27 Paul wrote that Christ in us is the **"hope of glory"**
    - b) We see why in Romans 8:18-25 (READ)
    - c) 1 Peter 1:3: **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"**
    - d) Colossians 3:4: **"When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."**
    - e) Those of us who have placed our faith and trust in Jesus Christ can know without a doubt that we will one day be resurrected to eternal life with Him
4. Takeaway:
- a. Earlier, we were reminded by Peter that we are to always be ready to give an answer regarding the hope that we have
  - b. The greatest evangelistic tool we have is our hope of salvation, so my question is, Do we reflect that hope to the world around us?
  - c. Often times as Christians we are known more for what we oppose than the hope we have:
    - 1) This is, in part, simply because the world hates what we stand for, so they focus on those things
    - 2) However, it's also in part because some spend more time preaching against the evils and sins of society than sharing the hope of the Gospel (not that we shouldn't point out sin)
  - d. What is it that unsaved people see in us? Do they only see what we stand against, or do they see the hope of salvation we have in God and Jesus Christ?