

NOTES FROM TIM GAMSTON'S SERMON- Sunday 2nd June 2024 am
TITLE: "Christ, the church's hope and Lord" TEXT: 1 Timothy 1 v 1-20
Series: "Guarding the deposit" Pt 1:
Scripture references from the ESV

1 Timothy 1:1-20 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope,² To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.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^[a] from God that is by faith. ⁵The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶Certain 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.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, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers,¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practise homosexuality, enslavers,^[b] liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound^[c] doctrine,¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

¹²I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

¹⁷To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.^[d] Amen.

¹⁸This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith,²⁰ among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

How are we, as individuals, meant to behave in the church?

What constitutes a good church, and how would we know that it is a good church?

What does a good church have to say about doctrine, worship, leadership, morality, social responsibility, and money and how are we, as members of a good church, meant to relate to those things?

There will be many different views on these matters – views that have been formed by our culture, traditions and our own assumptions and desires. There is a danger that tensions and division will arise because of this, since we all come from different backgrounds.

What the church teaches, and how we respond to the church's teaching, has implications for our eternal destiny. The church must teach truth or we can end up believing a lie and being eternally lost. The two questions:

**What is a good church and how are good members to behave
are questions of eternal significance**

Unlike modern day letters, in the ancient world letters began with the author of the letter, then to whom the letter was addressed and then the content of the letter. We should ask who these people are and why is Paul writing to Timothy?

- Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ (v1). He was saved by Christ, and set apart by him to take the gospel to the gentile world. We might describe him as a missionary and church planter.
- Timothy acted as an 'intern' to Paul, travelling with him extensively, learning gospel doctrine and how to apply it, and watching how Paul set up churches.

Timothy had been tasked by Paul to oversee the churches established by him previously in Ephesus. On a visit to those churches, they saw that false teachers were teaching things against the truth of the gospel and Paul left Timothy in charge to stop them (v3). He, himself, was needed elsewhere.

With this letter, Paul was trying to help Timothy to understand how to stop the false teachers, in case his return was delayed. **I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Tim 3:14-15).**

Timothy needed to know how church members were to behave and the importance of sound doctrine and guarding the truth of the gospel. Today we, here at Broadstone Baptist Church, need to know this too. Back then and today, we all need to know this primarily because of who the church belongs to.

- Very clearly, Paul tells us that the church belongs to God, referring to it as **the household of God, and the church of the living God (1 Tim 3:15)**

Our understanding of church, and how we are to behave as members of the church, is often influenced by three factors, none of which have any right to shape it. We must always remember that the church belongs to God.

1. **The church does not belong to state or culture.** Paul does not refer to the church as the church of Jerusalem (or Rome or England) as if the church belongs to any of those places.

It is the church that belongs to the living God

When we link the church with state or culture, it becomes the case that the state or culture believes

that it has the right to tell the church what to do. The debate on same sex marriage is an example of this. Politicians debated marriage as if it was a human institution, and concluded that same sex marriage is ok, wanting to please the culture. They then sought to impose that decision on the church, trying to bend the church to the will of the state and culture.

Jesus tells us that we are to be salt and light in our world so that the church has a purifying effect on the society in which we live. When we live as if the church belongs to state and culture, those things shape the church rather than the other way round, and the church loses its distinctiveness. Then we are just a religious club with nothing different to offer.

The church belongs to God, not to state or culture

2. **The church does not belong to its traditions.** Not all church traditions are wrong, but when a church is bound by its traditions, it becomes ineffective in reaching contemporary culture. There is much we can learn from the Puritans, for example, but though the human heart is unchanged from the 17th century, the issues we face are very different. The gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ alone does

not ever change, but some things the church has traditionally done will not work in today's culture.

Paul understood the need to apply different methods. Speaking to Jewish congregations, he started with the Law of Moses, but when dealing with Gentiles, he started with their poets and their own religious practices. When the church believes it is owned by its traditions, it will find its purpose in maintaining them, and become irrelevant to contemporary culture. The church builds on the past but is not owned by it.

The church belongs to God, not to its traditions

3. The church does not belong to our own preferences. Church membership is a good thing. It safeguards the church, helps the elders know who they are accountable for to Christ, gives members a greater sense of belonging and responsibility and is one of the ways Christ has ordained to determine those who are true believers.

However, there is a danger that we can think of church membership as being the same as membership of any other

club, where the members make all the decisions based on their own preferences.

The church is different. We do not make decisions about the church based on:

- Our personal preferences
- What we used to do in our previous church or what other churches are doing
- What looks trendy in our culture

We make decisions about the church based on what Christ commands in his word

- It is Christ who died to redeem the church: **who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession** (Titus 2:14)
- It is Christ who is the head of the church: God the Father **put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church** (Ephesians 1:22)

Christ is the one who died for the church and is its head

The church belongs to Christ

What does this have to do with the letter to Timothy and how is it relevant for us? It is a letter that could just as well have been written to today's Pastor Timothy and to

Broadstone Baptist Church. As we work through it, we will see that Christ expects the church to teach and live out doctrine that is very different to what our contemporary culture believes and what much of church tradition and our own preferences do in shaping our idea of church. King Jesus will speak into:

- The use of money, sex and power
- The roles of men and women within church life
- The qualities required of leaders
- The responsibility we have for the vulnerable

We must not ignore it. It is vital that we hear what Paul says to Timothy and that the church is changed because of it, or we will never become what Christ wants us to be.

- Where do Pastors get the courage from to command what Jesus commands, and to confront those who were saying the opposite?
- Where do we, as the church, get the courage to live for Jesus when our culture, traditions and our own personal desires all want to draw us in the opposite direction to what Jesus commands?

When Paul refers to God as **our Saviour** (v1), he is using the word to mean more than our saviour from sin. It has the sense of God being our refuge and the one who gives us strength and joy in the challenges of everyday Christian living.

The courage to live out this letter will come as we put our confidence in Christ, who is our hope and Lord

How does this happen?

- a) **We must be confident in Christ's commands.** What Paul commands Timothy to teach is the message he, as an apostle, has from King Jesus. This is a letter from King Jesus to us.
- As our Pastor, the 21st century Timothy must be diligent in study and rightly handle and apply the text. Anyone teaching a false gospel must be corrected and silenced.
 - As a congregation, we cannot have a take it or leave it attitude. Our lives must be brought under what the text teaches, even when pride or other sin causes us to resist.

No matter how controversial the text may be, we need to bring our church in line with it.

King Jesus has spoken

b) We must be confident in Christ's calling. Paul affirms Timothy's status as a true child of the kingdom of Christ

(v2), and in doing so, affirms his status for the task Paul has given him. Though he is young and not an apostle, he will teach the same gospel truth that Paul received from Christ Jesus and would have taught if he had been able to stay. Every Pastor or elder who holds to the same gospel truth that Christ has given to Paul needs to have that same confidence in his calling.

That is also true for the church. We are called by Christ to speak Christ's truth into our culture, and to call people to repent of their sin and turn to Christ for their salvation. The church is not a sideshow.

The Pastor is there to speak on behalf of King Jesus.

The church is Christ's representative on earth

We can be confident in our calling

c) We must be confident in Christ's victory. When Paul speaks of **Christ our hope** (v1), he has in mind our hope of resurrection life. God has saved us, through Christ Jesus, who died, rose to life, ascended into heaven and will return to this earth. When he does, the church will be made perfect and we will be fully what God intends us to be.

At the moment, we easily drift from truth, influenced by state, culture, tradition and our own sinful desires. That is why we need pastors like Timothy who are called by Christ to courageously teach the truth, confront error, rebuke wrong and lead the church to be what Christ wants.

- One day they will not be needed, because we shall see Christ and be fully like him.

It is that hope that spurs our Pastor on to do the work, knowing that the power of Christ that raised Christ to life is at work in all of us to change us. There is absolute confidence in the certainty that:

Christ will complete what he started.

d) **We can be confident in Christ's blessing.** Paul knew that Timothy would have a tough time and would need to experience the blessing of Christ's grace, mercy and peace. Paul prays down

- God's grace – his special favour on Timothy so that he would have all the gifts and resources needed
- God's mercy – his help for the helpless, which is how Timothy would have felt in the work
- God's peace – his shalom, that assurance of personal well-being that Timothy would have needed.

As we courageously teach Christ's message and live out Christ's message, so we can pray for, and have the assurance of

Christ's grace, peace and mercy

We will see how Christ can use all of us to speak grace, peace and mercy into each other's lives. This letter is hugely relevant to us as a church and as we work through it, we will see how

**We ought to behave in the household of God,
which is the church of the living God,
a pillar and buttress of the truth**