

1 Timothy #2

May 4, 2025

Series: Body Essentials: Imperatives for Church and Leaders

Today's Message: Be Faithful to the Gospel; 1 Timothy 1:3-11

If you remember Charles Spurgeon, you will remember that he had a long history in preaching. Sometimes he would preach 5 or more times a week. But he never allowed himself or the church he pastored to waver from conforming each and every teaching, project and ministry to the gospel. He made this commitment at the start of his ministry. His first words from the Metropolitan Tabernacle pulpit went like this:

"I would propose that the subject of the ministry in this house, as long as this platform shall stand and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshipers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ. If I am asked what is my creed, I reply, 'It is Jesus Christ.' I will not bind myself to any system or other human treatise but Jesus Christ, who is the sum and substance of the gospel, who is Himself all theology and the incarnation of every precious truth."

Sometimes people will ask a minister who has had a very hard ministry, would he have ever gone into ministry if he had known how hard and difficult it would be? Probably not. There is not a true minister of Jesus Christ, including Spurgeon, that would ever go into the ministry were it not for knowing the Good Shepherd and Savior of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. Wait until the end of the message to hear Spurgeon's final words.

The Lord Jesus has called Timothy into the ministry (1:18; 4:14) and Paul called Timothy to serve with him in the ministry of the gospel. Timothy's ministry is going to be a difficult ministry. And we will learn, as we study the letters to Timothy, that although he responded to the call, there was something about him that caused Paul to be extra attentive to build up Timothy's confidence and courage. The way he did this for Timothy was by making very clear two things: who is the Lord Jesus Christ, and also making clear the task at hand: to carry out Paul's instructions (1:3; 4:6,11) and to not get into never-ending arguments because they lead people away from gospel clarity and into confusion (see 2 Timothy 2:23-26).

The thread of fidelity to the supremacy of the gospel runs through the entire letter. We will look at our verses today in two parts. First an explanation of the text, then an application of the text.

I) (1:3-11) Paul encouraged Timothy to teach sound doctrine.

A) (1:3-4): Timothy's purpose: He is to remain in Ephesus and stand firm in the Scriptures.

1) To remain

(a) Paul *urged* Timothy to *remain*. The idea is pressed hard with urgency.

(i) Perhaps Timothy was balking at the idea of facing the inevitable confrontations.

2) To instruct

(a) NIV: command. The word implies authoritative (i.e. apostolic authority) instruction.

(i) Timothy's leadership was authorized by Paul. He was to act as a man on command.

3) Instruct certain men. Timothy was to command a certain group of people, most likely leaders.

(a) not to teach (spread) false doctrine, or false teachings.

(i) It is likely these men were elders or leaders. This is in keeping with Paul's words in Acts 20, when he met the elders of the church who had come to visit Paul.

(a) Acts 20:29-30: "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from **your own number** men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."

(b) Or devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.

(i) We don't really know what exactly this means. But we do know...

(a) The myths and endless genealogies were **distractions**! Sensational stories, and delving into endless genealogies, that offered **NO clarity on God's saving plan**!

- (b) These teachings were diversions that “promote controversies rather than God’s work—which is by faith.”
 - 1. “God’s work”—This phrase is direct in reference to **God’s redemptive plan**.
- B) (1:5-7): Timothy’s goal: To teach sound doctrine, which provides clarity and heart change.
 - 1) The goal of Timothy’s ministry was to promote the proper balance between the law and gospel.
 - (a) This sound doctrine would promote love springing out of changed lives exemplified by a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith. The false teachers could offer none of this.
 - (i) The false teachers teaching was “meaningless talk” bathed in ignorance (1:7), offering no heart change (1:5).
 - (ii) Instead, the false teachers were leading believers away from **grace** (Gal. 5:11ff) and into the bondage of legalism. This appeals to the flesh, which loves rules and regulations because they give the appearance of holiness but **provides NO change of heart**.
- C) (1:8-11): Timothy’s challenge: He is to clarify the proper balance of the law and the gospel.
 - 1) The law is good, and properly used it serves a necessary purpose in two ways:
 - (a) It *exposes*, *restrains*, and *convicts* the lawless as lawbreakers.
 - (b) The law cannot save anyone (Gal.2:21;3:21-29); it can only reveal their need for a savior!
 - 2) The list of 13 kinds of people who were condemned by the Law (decatalogue). In particular it addresses lawbreakers who are guilty of breaking commandments 5-9.
 - (a) “Honor Father and Mother” (b) “not murder” (c) “not commit adultery” (d) “not steal” (e) “not bear false witness”
 - (b) And any other behavior that runs contrary to sound doctrine.
 - 3) The Law and Gospel balance: Only the Gospel saves. But the Law and Gospel go together, according to the Gospel Paul received.
 - (a) Law without Gospel is a guilt without a remedy.
 - (b) Gospel without Law is meaningless to people who don’t believe they are sinners
- II) Application: The Supremacy of the Gospel for Church and Leaders.
 - A) The Work of God is hard. Timothy was assigned ministry in Ephesus, a city of terrible idolatry and gross immorality. Even though Paul had done a great work and had many converts, Satan had many workers in the city putting up great resistance to the Gospel work of the Timothy and the church.
 - B) Obstacles are not excuses. Timothy had many obstacles and a lot of pushback.
 - 1) Timothy was a man under command even though he had the obstacle of “timidity” (2 Tim. 1:7).
 - (a) “Remain in Ephesus”
 - 2) Timothy had health problems (1 Tim.5:23). Take care of it, but stay on task.
 - 3) Timothy was young and not given proper respect by church members (4:12). But he was to exemplify godly conduct.
 - C) The Gospel is Everything. Never compromise it or punt on the faith.
 - 1) When you are ailing and close to death what will be your comfort other than the gospel?
 - 2) When you take your last breath will you cry, “Oh, that I had more Law?” Will it not be the old, old story of Jesus and His love that will be your peace?
 - D) The Gospel will never disappoint:
 - 1) We have Spurgeon’s last words: “[He] is the choicest of princes. He is always to be found in the thickest part of the battle. When the wind blows cold He always takes the bleak side of the hill. The heaviest end of the cross lies ever on His shoulders. If He bids us carry a burden, He carries it also. If there is anything that is gracious, generous, kind and tender, yea lavish and superabundant in love, you will always find Him. These 40 years and more have I served Him, blessed be His name! May God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus even this day. Amen!
 - 2) The Greatest need of the Church and of Leaders is to know God and His Son Jesus Christ and the precious gospel given to us according to the love of God.