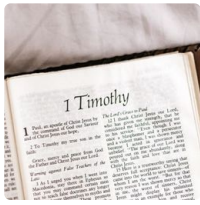


OpenTheo

1 Timothy 1



1 Timothy - Steve Gregg

Paul asserts his apostolic authority in 1 Timothy 1, while also emphasizing the importance of love, maintaining a clean conscience, and avoiding false doctrine. He addresses the need for Timothy to stop certain people from straying from the faith and teaches that faith in Christ produces works of love. Paul also warns against faith becoming shipwrecked and reminds Timothy of the prophecies spoken over him as a source of encouragement.

Transcript

I think we should be able to do it. In a previous series of tapes on Timothy, actually the last time I taught it, I think, I discovered on the date of those tapes, it was 1985, so that's been about seven years, like I said yesterday, I covered about two chapters per session of both the books of Timothy and Titus. And having taken the rather extensive introduction yesterday, we shouldn't have to be detained on a lot of details that we've already covered in that introduction.

So let's begin with chapter one. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ our hope, to Timothy, my true son in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. This is a fairly typical opening.

There's not too much we have to say about it. Paul mentions his apostleship, as usual, at the beginning, so that the authority that he wields might be evident. It's clear that when Paul is given instructions in his epistles, and particularly in these, that the authority behind these instructions is very important.

Because Paul is going to give instructions about who to select as elders and deacons, how to bring discipline and doctrinal purity into the church, and to correct persons who are teaching false doctrine. And not just everybody can walk in and command the respect of everybody in the church and say, OK, this is what the doctrines are going to be in this church, these are the people who are going to be the leaders in this church. That takes a special role of authority, and Paul claims from himself that authority.

Now, of course, he claims his apostolic authority at the beginning of all of his epistles, which is why they are in our Bible. Because apostolic authority is more than ordinary authority in the church. There are elders who carry some authority in the church, and there are other positions that have some kind of weight, but there is no authority in the Bible greater than that of the apostle, who is the agent of Jesus Christ, authorized by Jesus to speak on his behalf.

And so, since Paul has many things to say which might, in some circumstances, be disputed by people who had a different opinion, or contrary parts of his view, he must assert immediately that he is speaking as an apostle, and therefore is not to be challenged on the things that he is going to say. Now, of course, Timothy knew that Paul was an apostle, and did not need to be reminded of this. However, there is some reason to believe that Paul did not intend this epistle for Timothy's eyes only.

He wrote it to Timothy as an apostolic associate, or a legate, that is, as a representative of himself, Paul, in the church. But, he said things to Timothy which might imply that Timothy might have to show this epistle to certain people who would challenge him. For example, later in the epistle, Paul says, Well, it's very nice to say to a young man, don't let anyone despise your youth, but how do you prevent a person from despising your youth? What is Timothy supposed to do to prevent people from despising his youth? It seems clear that Timothy should be able to present this letter to those who did despise his youth, saying, none other than the apostle Paul has said that no one should despise my youth.

And, therefore, the epistle, though it is addressed to Timothy, is to be available for him to show to people who might challenge him, or despise him, or look down upon him. And, therefore, Paul does assert his apostolic authority, though Timothy does not need to be reminded of it. It may be that some who would challenge what Timothy seeks to implement from this letter would need to be shown that this letter has come from Paul, who is speaking apostolically, and therefore not to be challenged.

Jesus Christ is here referred to in verse 1 as our hope. In most instances where the hope of the Christian is described, in other writings of the New Testament, our hope is said to be either the resurrection or the adhering of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Now, of course, there may not be any difference between the resurrection and the adhering of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, because we know that when Jesus appears in glory, we also will appear in glory with Him, according to Colossians.

And, therefore, our hope is actually to see Jesus, to be like Him, to be resurrected in glory like Him. And no doubt that is something of what Paul has in mind when he speaks of Jesus Christ being our hope. Our hope is actually the appearing of Jesus Christ, that we look forward to, and associated with that appearing is our own transformation into His likeness.

He addresses the letter to Timothy. This sets this letter out as an unusual letter for Paul. Of the dozen letters that we have that we attribute to Paul, or maybe 13 if we include Hebrews, only four of them are addressed to individuals.

Of course, two letters to Timothy, and the letter to Titus, and the letter to Philemon. Other than this, the letters of Paul are usually addressed to churches, and it is at this point in his opening that he usually mentions which church he is writing to. Here, however, he addresses it not to a church.

Though Timothy was in a church, he was in the church of Ephesus, as we shall see in verse 3. But he addresses it to the man who is his associate, whom he calls, my true son in the faith. I mentioned yesterday, when we were talking about who Timothy was, that Timothy may or may not have been an actual convert of Paul's. You would think from the expression, son in the faith, that Paul is referring to the fact that he had led Timothy to the Lord.

And while he might have, we don't know whether he did or not. We know that Timothy's mother and grandmother had been converted through Paul's efforts on his first missionary journey, and Timothy may have been converted on the same occasion or sometime after Paul's departure. But anybody converted by Paul would be his son in the faith in that sense.

Paul is speaking of Timothy as a son of the faith in an unusual sense. He may, as I said, have been a convert of Paul's, and there's no reason for us to doubt that that was so, though we don't have any proof of that. But he was a son of Paul's in another sense in the faith, in the sense that a disciple is said to be a son of his master.

In the times in which Paul wrote, it was not uncommon for a disciple to call his master father, or a master to call his disciple son. The language of father and son was commonly used among those who shared a discipleship relationship, and certainly Paul and Timothy had that relationship, whether Paul had led Timothy to the Lord initially or not is of little consequence when we consider that Timothy received all of his essential training in ministry and his release in the ministry under the tutelage of Paul. When he says, my true son in the faith, my genuine son in the faith, he's speaking of the fact that Timothy is not simply a disciple or a convert of his, but one who truly shows the marks of his father, as it were, of his disciple.

One who has taken on the character and the likeness of his teacher, or of his father in the faith. We see probably the best expansion on this idea of Timothy being Paul's true son in that sense. In Philippians chapter 2, verses 19 through 22, where we also see Timothy described as a son of Paul, but he somewhat clarifies in what sense he sees Timothy as a true son in the faith.

Philippians 2, verses 19 through 22, says, But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to

you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state, for I have no one like-minded who will sincerely care for your state. That is, no one like Timothy, who is as like-minded with Paul as Timothy is. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

But you know his, that is, Timothy's proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. So, Timothy is like a son to Paul in that he is served like a son serves with his father. He is proven character.

His character is like that of Paul's. He's like-minded with Paul. In this respect, he's a true son in the faith.

Now, when Paul says he has served with me like a son serves with his father, he is no doubt thinking of the imagery that Jesus himself brought up in John chapter 5, where Jesus is describing his own relationship with his father in generic terms. That is, in terms that resemble the relationship of any son with a father in that day, and particularly the idea that a son would apprentice under his father as an apprentice in the same family business. And, let's see here, John chapter 5, verse 19, Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly I say to you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the father do, or whatever he does, the son also does it like manner.

Now, Jesus is obviously talking about himself and his father God. In fact, the New King James even capitalizes the word son and father to make that clear that he is referring to himself and his father. Although, of course, the capital letters are not found in the Greek.

This is the translator's preference. Many commentators are in agreement that while Jesus is talking about his own relationship to his father, he's using a parable, as it were, a parable of the apprentice son. He's speaking of that which is true of almost every son and their father in that society, that the son does not automatically know how to conduct the father's business.

Jesus, for example, was raised in a carpenter shop and became a carpenter. But he didn't know instinctively how to build the things that he learned to build. He had to watch and see how his father, Joseph, did, his earthly, apostate father.

And Jesus was in the position that most sons were in under their fathers. To learn the family trade. Not to know it by birth, but to learn it by imitation.

And he says it in verse 20 there, John 5, For the father loves the son and shows him all the things that he himself does. This is true of all fathers and sons in that society. The father intended for the son to take over the family business and taught him how to do things exactly the way he had learned it from his father in most cases.

And Jesus says, this is like my relationship with my father. Like any son with his father, he watches what his father does, and he does the same things the same way. So that he

might be a worthy son laboring with his father.

And Paul said of Timothy, in the passage we noted in Philippians 2.22, that Timothy, as a son with a father, has labored with me in the gospel. Or served with me in the gospel. So that he's saying that my partnership with Timothy has been like that of a father apprenticing his son.

And Timothy has been like his son. Serving, learning, watching what I do, imitating me in all respects, and now he can do the work I do in the same fashion. He's about ready to take over the family business.

And in 1 Timothy, we see Paul's intention to commit to Timothy the things which have been committed to him, Paul. And we know in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, he tells Timothy, the things that you've gotten from me, you commit those to other men, another generation down, who will in turn teach others. So Paul is concerned, like a father, is to pass along the family trade through several generations.

Paul wants to pass along the ministry that he has through successive generations. And Timothy is his son, who should pass it on to, as it were, Paul's grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the faith. Okay, so all of this is implied, I believe, when Paul speaks to Timothy and says, my true son in the faith.

There were others who could be called Paul's sons in the faith. No doubt Luke was one of those. Titus may well have been.

In fact, Paul does refer to Titus as his son in the faith. In chapter, Titus 1, maybe I'm mistaken here. Yes, Titus 1.4, he calls Titus my true son in our common faith also, which indicates that the same things that he said of Titus and Timothy apply to Titus.

Titus has served with him, and we pointed out yesterday that Titus also traveled with Paul and Barnabas early on, probably immediately after his first missionary journey, and also was with Paul, apparently associated, even after the Book of Acts closes. So Titus and Timothy both were partners of longstanding under Paul and served like sons apprenticing in the ministry under Paul. And just as a man apprenticing his son would be very concerned that his son would learn to do the same skill exactly in the fashion, the same quality that the father knew how to do it, and that the son would then pass it on to his children with the same carefulness, so that generation after generation there would be no deterioration in the quality of the work that the family produced, so that the family's reputation might be maintained, so Paul also shows the concern that the ministry should not deteriorate in quality, generation after generation.

Sadly, Paul's wishes were not fulfilled, because as the next generation gone, and the following generation, and the next century, and so forth, the quality of the character of people in ministry did tend to deteriorate, though not extremely rapidly, but soon

enough, too soon, ministry began to cease to fall to the hands of people who had the proven character and the like-mindedness of Paul, and Timothy, and those. But Timothy was still a good example of what a son of Paul, in a way, should be like. He says in verse 2, "...be in their grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." I would only point out that grace and peace are commonly found in Paul's openings.

Virtually every one of his letters opens with a wish of grace and peace. Here, and in 2 Timothy alone, we find mercy added to it. Grace and mercy and peace.

I don't know that there's any cryptic significance to the addition of mercy to the list. I would say since these were the two latest epistles of Paul, in all likelihood, it may be that he, in his older age, began to dwell more on the mercy of God, and whereas in his earlier letters he would not ever omit reference to grace and peace, he now found it compelling in his own understanding and appreciation for the mercy of God to make mention of that mercy as well, because later on in this chapter, he points out how that he himself had been a recipient of great mercy. In verse 13 of chapter 1, he says, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy.

And also in verse 16, however, for this reason I obtained mercy. So, Paul, perhaps as he grew older and reflected more on the great things God had done for him, and on his own total... How should I say it? Undeservingness, I'll say. Unmeritedness of this mercy.

It may have been greatly on his mind in his later years, and so we find in his two later epistles, 1 and 6, that he adds mercy to grace and peace in his reading. Now, verse 3, he gets down to business. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, which of course is northern Greece, the Grecian peninsula was divided then, and I suppose even now, less officially, I don't know, into the northern and southern part.

The southern part was Achaia, where cities like Athens and Corinth and Centria were, which Paul had churches in, or had done some work in. Macedonia was northern Greece. It was the first part of Greece that Paul had ever visited.

Philippi was the first Grecian city in Macedonia that Paul ever visited, and we know from his letter to the Philippians, this church remained one of his favorite churches. Also, of course, the churches of Thessalonica and Berea, and some others, no doubt, were the Macedonian churches of which he spoke. He apparently really enjoyed his ministry in some of the Macedonian churches, and really was impressed with them.

In 2 Corinthians, he commends the Macedonian churches for their self-sacrificing generosity, and taking a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. We know from Acts chapter 20, verse 1, that Paul departed on one occasion from Ephesus and went into Macedonia. And as I said in our introduction, this departure from Ephesus and going into Macedonia that Paul mentions here, cannot be that one.

At least, it cannot very easily be that one, because in Acts chapter 20, in verse 4, Timothy is mentioned as one of those who was accompanying Paul in those travels. But here, he leaves Timothy in Ephesus. So, this must be another, a later occasion, a journey which is not recorded in Acts, and therefore, in all likelihood, must be after Paul was released from prison, and after the book of Acts had closed.

So, this gives us information about further travels of Paul after those recorded in the book of Acts. He apparently had a fourth, and maybe a fifth, missionary journey as well. He says, When I went into Macedonia, I urged you to remain in Ephesus, that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

Now, Ephesus, here, apparently is the place where Timothy is when he receives the letter. We can't prove that, I suppose, because Paul might be talking about something in the remote past. I remember when I left here at Ephesus.

But certainly, the things he is charging Timothy to do in this letter are the same things that he said he charged him to do in Ephesus, and no doubt, it's still in Ephesus. And according to tradition, Timothy spent his remaining years in Ephesus and died there. So, it's a safe assumption that the letter is sent to Ephesus.

And as such, it becomes at least the third, or second or third letter sent to that city of importance. We know that the letter called Ephesians, though it was probably a circular letter that went around to several different churches, apparently was first sent to Ephesus, and from there it was circulated to other churches of Asia, and returned to Ephesus, and it was apparently kept in the custody of that church, so that later on it came to be associated with that church. Paul had himself established the church in Ephesus.

In the 18th chapter of Acts, he had spent two or three years there, the longest recorded period of ministry that Paul spent anywhere. The second longest period of ministry that we know that Paul spent in any one place was in Corinth, where he spent only 18 months. So, he spent probably close to twice as long in Ephesus.

We're told that persecution broke out there, and he withdrew the disciples into a school, and then from there he began to apparently send out teams or travel himself, and while he had his headquarters in Ephesus, all of Asia he sent to have been evangelized during those two to three years that Paul spent there. So, that church was a very privileged church, in that it seems to have had the lengthiest period of ministry from Paul himself. Furthermore, Priscilla and Aquila, Paul's companions, stayed there when Paul left, and Apollos had ministered there as well.

Later on, Paul visited Ephesus again, and actually the two or three years of ministry was his second visit. He apparently started a small work in Ephesus, initially in chapter 18, but in chapter 19 of Acts, where he returned a second time, and then he spent his two or

three years, and Asia was evangelized. But, the point is that Ephesus had the privilege of a lot of personal ministry from Paul, and now we see apparently personal ministry from Timothy as well, one of Paul's favorite, probably the best companion to Timothy that Paul had.

We know that later on, the Apostle John spent his final years in Ephesus, at the church there, and it would seem that he died there as well, and we know that the first of the seven letters that Jesus sent to the seven churches of Asia was addressed to the church of Ephesus as well, in the book of Revelation, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1. And so, this particular church was more privileged than most. A lot of labor had been invested there. Paul spent a long time there.

Timothy spent, apparently, his final years there. John, the Apostle, spent his final years there. The letter of the Ephesians was written to that church.

This letter was sent to that church, as well as probably 2 Timothy. A letter from Jesus was sent to that church, Revelation 2, 1. As well, we have a special conference that Paul held with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, although he was not on that occasion able to visit the Ephesian church, which would have been his third visit there. But, he called the elders to Miletus to meet with him, and he gave them a lengthy instruction in Acts 20, which is recorded for us, so that we can see that a lot of attention and care was put into this church.

Why? Well, in all likelihood, because of the city's own importance. It was the principal city of the Roman province of Asia. Now, when we say Asia, biblically, we're not talking about the continent that we call Asia.

Asia was the name for a province of the Romans, which we now call Turkey. The country that we call Turkey is the same region as was called Asia by the Romans. It was simply a Roman province named Asia, and Ephesus was the principal city of it.

And so, because of its importance in the region, and because many of the more important churches were established there, Paul and other apostles spent a great deal of effort keeping that church in good shape. Well, so Paul left Timothy there, that he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification, which is in faith. Now, it would seem from the reference to genealogies that the persons he has in mind are Jewish.

Some would say that the genealogies refer to the Gnostic heresy, particularly the Gnostic idea that God is so aloof from the material world that he can only reach it through a series of emanations, and that each of these emanations are what Paul has in mind as genealogies, because each would be something like a generation, not really a generation in the sense that we usually think of a generation, but that in order to come

to God, the Gnostics felt you had to know the passwords to go from one emanation to the next and so forth, and the whole series of them could be talked about as a genealogy. So, Paul shows concern about genealogies elsewhere in Timothy, and it seems to be a major part of the heresy that Paul is concerned about, and therefore some think that the genealogies refer to this series of emanations taught in Gnosticism. However, the word genealogies is an unusual word to use for that concept, and it is also true that Paul shows concern about Judaism in this letter.

In fact, immediately after this, he talks about those, in verse 7, who want to be teachers of the law. In Titus chapter 1, in verse 11, he talks about those of the circumcision, or chapter 10, Titus 1.10, he talks about his concern about especially those of the circumcision, and we know there was a circumcision party that troubled Paul, and they may well have joined ranks with the Gnostics, and we probably are talking about a somewhat Gnostic-ly influenced brand of Judaism. Both the legalism of Judaism and the antinomianism, or on the other hand, asceticism, Gnosticism, all these things are a problem and a deviation from truth.

And so Paul says, Timothy, stop people from teaching these doctrines. Now, the implication is there are these doctrines now being taught in Ephesus, and Paul had to send Timothy there on a special assignment to stop these people from doing this. Now, Paul states positively what the Christian's doctrine, message, and behavior is.

Verse 5, now the purpose of the commandment is love, from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith. The King James says, from faith unfeigned. The word feigned is an old English word that means pretend, and therefore faith unfeigned means unpretended or sincere.

Therefore, the New King James updates it to sincere, and some other modern translations do as well. Now, the purpose of the commandment, or the charge that he gives, or that we have received, is that we might be loving. Now, the commandment here could refer to the Jewish law, in view of the fact that he says in verse 9, or verse 8, that we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully.

That is, the law of Moses is not a bad thing, as long as you understand what it's all about. And he could say, in verse 5, the purpose of the law of Moses is love, and that would be a true statement. However, since he has used the word commandment back in verse 1, where he has impaled Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, it's more likely that the commandment in verse 5 is not a reference to the law of Moses, but a reference to the charge that he, Paul, has received, and which he passes along to Timothy, and what would be applicable to Christians in general.

That is, God's commandment to Christians. And the purpose of God giving us this charge is that the result might be love, which is quite obvious in all of Paul's other writings, that love is the essential duty. And we don't have to use Paul's writings to discover that.

We can get that from the Old Testament itself, and from Jesus, who taught that the great commandment is that you love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and that you love your neighbors yourself, and this is the whole duty of man, this is that upon which all the other commandments hang. And so Paul is simply in agreement with both the Old Testament and Jesus, and Paul's earlier writings in saying the ultimate goal, the purpose, that God has commanded us in the first place, is that we might love. Now, there are three factors or elements from which love is to spring.

Love from, or out of in the Greek, ek is out of, love that comes out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. There are three things that must be present in a person if they are to love in the manner that the commandment enjoins. Now, there are people, of course, who don't have pure hearts, clean consciences, or sincere faith, who have something like love.

They love their children, perhaps, they love their wives, they may love their brother in some way, but human love, mere human love, is not the type that God's commandment wants us to have. It is a superhuman, a spiritual kind of a love that God is looking for from us, and the only way a person can have this love that God is looking for is if they have, first of all, pure heart. Remember David prayed in Psalm 51, creating me a pure heart, a clean heart.

It says in Psalm 24, Who shall ascend to the Lord? He that has a pure heart and clean hands. Jesus himself said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Matthew chapter 5. To have a pure heart suggests that your heart is holy one way, that it is complete.

Pure means unmixed, undiluted. I mean, that's the common meaning here, even in our modern English. If something is pure, it means that it has no foreign elements in it.

And the heart in the Bible usually does not refer to your blood pump under the fifth rib, but it refers to the spiritual motivation and thought line. The character, I mean, just the inner line, really, is the heart of man. His mind, his thoughts, his goals, his values, his whatever, motivations.

And therefore, to have a pure heart is a heart that's motivated by one thing, and not with mixed motives, not with mixed goals, not with mixed values, but that are holy, exactly as the commandment says in Deuteronomy. Loving the Lord with all one's heart, and all one's mind, and with all one's strength. To love God with all your heart suggests that there's really no room in your heart for any other motive than love for God.

You must be pure in heart in the sense that your love for God is the only motive to be found in your heart. And all that you do, you do out of concern for His glory and for His blessing. Paul states that in other places.

For example, in 1 Corinthians 10, I think it's verse 30, he says, Whatsoever you do, in word or in deed, whether you eat or drink, he says, do all to the glory of God. Everything you do is to be done with one motivation only, and that is out of love for God to glorify Him. Now, God's looking for love that comes from that, from a heart that is holy in an undiluted degree devoted to love for God.

That's the, you're supposed to love the Lord with all your heart. And so a heart that is pure does not have more sinister, more purulent, more selfish interests motivating it, but just motivated by the desire to do what pleases God. And the love that God approves for our fellow man must come from that state of heart first.

Also, a clean conscience. And of course, if your heart is pure, you're likely to have a clean conscience as well. A clean conscience, the word conscience, which first appears here and then appears many times in the past, but this is after it, refers to the moral consciousness or self-judgment.

The word conscience in English, conscience, means literally with knowledge, but that's not very helpful in understanding what the word conscience means. In the Greek, it means self-judgment. It means making a moral evaluation, discerning right from wrong.

It is, in fact, moral consciousness, awareness of good and evil. And the only way you can have a good conscience is when you judge yourself, when you look at yourself, you can see good there instead of evil. Otherwise you have an evil conscience, and the Bible talks about having an evil conscience also.

A good conscience and an evil conscience. That is, am I conscious of being good or am I conscious of being evil? Now, the Christian only becomes a Christian once he has first become aware that he is evil. He has to be convicted in his conscience of his own sins.

It says in John chapter 8, when the woman taken in adultery was before Jesus, and Jesus wrote in the dust, and he said that he that is without sin, let him cast the first stone, it says the Pharisees and those Jews who were around him, convicted in their own conscience, began to withdraw and move away, because they began to be aware, conscience is moral awareness, they came to be aware of their own evil, and an evil conscience, this did not lead them to repentance, sadly. But to the Christian, this awareness of an evil conscience brings us to Christ so that we might be cleansed. And we are told in Hebrews chapter 1, in Hebrews, did I say chapter 1? Chapter 9. Hebrews chapter 9, verse 14, says, How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience, or clean your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? Now notice, the blood of Christ is capable of cleaning or removing the defilement from your conscience.

You must come to Christ with an evil conscience, in a sense, that you know that you are evil. You wouldn't come to him for cleansing if you didn't already know that. You start out

with an evil conscience, in fact the word evil conscience is used in Hebrews chapter 10, and verse 22, Hebrews 10, 22, says, Let us draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

An interesting thing about this verse is that it has all the same three elements that we find in 1 Timothy 1, 5. A pure heart, sincere faith, and a good conscience. The wording is a little different. It says, let us draw near with a true heart.

1 Timothy 1, 5 says a pure heart. Well, a true heart certainly is very close in thought to that. Full assurance of faith, that is a sincere faith, and having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

So we've got the faith, the pure heart, and a good conscience. But he says the way our conscience becomes good is by having it sprinkled by the blood of Christ from its evilness. We knew we had an evil conscience, we're conscious of evil in ourselves, and therefore we come to Christ and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1, 7 tells us, and we now have a good conscience. That is, as long as we walk in the light. It says in 1 John 1, 7, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, as with God, he and I have fellowship, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

So the cleanness of the conscience comes by walking in the light. Now, what if we don't walk in the light? What if we do something wrong? Well, our conscience then is dirty, our conscience is defiled. We know it.

The Holy Spirit convicts us that we have done wrong when we do. And what do we do then? 1 John 1, 9 tells us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So, 1 John 1, 7 tells us we maintain a clean conscience by walking in the light. Two verses later he tells us that if we have failed to walk in the light, if we've sinned, then we have to confess, and then we can be restored to a clean conscience. So a Christian has no excuse for living with an evil conscience.

He may fall into sin, but he must not retain an evil conscience. And God uses the conscience to draw you back to himself. And when a person is neglecting repentance, when a person has sinned, a Christian has sinned, and has not immediately repented, he has a conscience that bothers him.

And he cannot love in the proper manner. In fact, he cannot really walk with God in the proper manner at all, while his conscience is still unplanned. We find, in fact, here, in 1 Timothy 1, 6, from which, that is, from which the conscience and the sincere faith and so forth, some have strayed and have turned aside to idle talk.

So when you stray from a clean conscience, when you don't maintain your conscience clear and your sincere faith and so forth, then you stray from God into other things. We find the same thing stated in verse 19. He says, Having faith and a good conscience, again, faith and a good conscience mentioned together, which some having rejected, that is, a rejected faith and a good conscience, concerning the faith, have suffered shipwreck.

So, the conscience must be maintained very carefully. Once you realize you've done a sinful thing, you ought to rapidly return to God in repentance. Because if you compromise your conscience, it's the first step into wrecking your faith altogether.

Now, Paul said in Timothy 1, 5, Love is from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith, as opposed to a pretended faith, as opposed to a false faith. It's not the first time Paul has told us that love springs out of faith, because he said in Galatians 5, 6, What matters to God is faith that works through love. Faith that produces loving action.

Galatians 5, 6 says, And true, saving faith will do that. It will produce loving behavior. When James said, Faith without works is dead, the works he has in mind are works of love.

Because he gives an example. He says, If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says, Be warmed and filled, but doesn't give them what they need. What profit is there in that? In other words, that's the kind of works he's talking about.

A true faith produces works of love. In that case, the example is generosity to the poor. John, in 1 John, talking about the same kind of circumstance, says, He that has this world's good and sees his brother in need, and shuts off his vows of confession from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? To neglect the poor is to be unloving.

It is also to lack the kind of works that faith is to have, according to James. Therefore, the works that faith produces are works of love. And Paul says, The purpose of the commandment is basically to busy us with love.

With the duties of love. And this comes out of a sincere faith. If you have a saving faith, it will produce love, a loving behavior.

But you also must have, of course, a pure heart and a good conscience, and these also come as a result of faith. Now, in verse 6 he says, Some have put these essential elements of the Christian life away from themselves, and have drifted and turned aside to idle talk. Talk that's empty, speculation and so forth.

Paul has a lot to say against talk that is idle and worthless, and irrelevant to the Christian life, and here's the first time we discover it. Desiring to be teachers of the law,

understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. There's nothing perhaps more tragic in the church than when persons make themselves teachers, and we're still when people listen to them, and are taught by them.

When those who are teaching don't get, they don't know what they're talking about. I don't know how many times I've sat under teachers, pastors and so forth, who are expounding on a passage which they clearly don't understand. I mean, they're maybe basing what they're saying on the particular wording of the King James Version, which, if they'd done a little homework, they would have found out that the Greek says something entirely different on that passage.

Or they're interpreting a phrase that's somewhat obscure, without making reference to the same phrase in another place, which would have helped them understand it, but they're getting the wrong idea, because they don't compare Scripture to Scripture. I mean, this kind of stuff happens so frequently, I think, you know, how embarrassing to be a teacher, and yet to have not done your homework, not to know what it is you're supposed to be talking about, and you're talking about something you don't understand, I mean, they ought to be sitting down learning, before they're up teaching. He says, there are people who desire to be teachers of the law, but they do not yet understand what they're saying, nor the things which they confidently affirm.

Now, this reminds me of the story of Ahimeas in 2 Samuel, chapter 18. You remember, after Absalom was killed, Joab wanted to send a message to David, that Absalom had been killed, and he chose a Cushite to carry the message, because it was bad news. But Ahimeas, who was apparently normally used for bringing good messages, wanted to run.

He wanted to carry the message. And Joab says, no, you'll run another day, we've got bad news today, you're not going to run today. And so he sent off the Cushite, and Ahimeas kept bugging Joab, and Joab said, why do you want to run when you don't have any news prepared? And Ahimeas says, well, you know, let me run anyway.

And so he said, go ahead. And so Ahimeas ran, he took a shortcut, and he beat the Cushite there and got there first, but he still didn't have any message. The messenger arrived, but he didn't have any news prepared.

He didn't have anything, he didn't know what he had to say. And when David said, well, what went on? And the guy said, well, I just saw a big tumult, I don't know, I didn't quite get any information about what was going on. And he kind of hedged and so forth, until the Cushite came.

And Ahimeas was a better runner, maybe, than the Cushite. Still, as a messenger, as a runner, had news, but he didn't have any information. He didn't have the message.

And, pardon? Second Samuel chapter 18, in particular, verse 22, Joab says to Ahimeas,

why do you want to run when you don't have any news prepared? Second Samuel 18, 22. And that's sort of like these teachers, they want to run. They want to be the messenger.

They want to carry the message, but they don't know what the message is. They want to be teachers, but they don't understand what the law is all about that they're seeking to teach. They ought to take some time and learn something before they teach anything.

He says, in verse 9, Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. Now, a couple of things to mention here. All these sins he describes are contrary to sound doctrine, and therefore, sound doctrine has an awful lot to do with morality.

Sound doctrine is a description of proper behavior for Christians, and all these things mentioned are contrary to sound doctrine. They are wrong behavior, and therefore, as I pointed out yesterday, doctrine should not be thought to mean theology merely, but practical instruction as part of sound doctrine. In fact, it's the main part of sound doctrine, as Paul uses the term doctrine in the pastoral epistles, and by the way, the word doctrine appears in the pastoral epistles more than in any other part of the Bible.

And in doctrine, therefore, I've heard people say, I don't want to hear doctrine, just give me practical, just tell me how to live. Well, they're misunderstanding what doctrine is. They're thinking of doctrine as, you know, the teachings about the Trinity, and about, you know, heaven and hell, and, you know, theological information.

But that's not what doctrine means. Doctrine means teaching, and the teaching of the church is practical teaching, telling people to do the right thing. As I pointed out yesterday, Paul considers right doctrine to be associated with the teachings of Jesus.

In 1 Timothy 6, 3, If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine, which is according to God in us. Sound doctrine is associated with the words of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, to teach people to do the things Jesus said is to teach sound doctrine.

Now, the list he gives is rather amazing. I mean, he lists some of the most terrible things. He doesn't list things like petty theft, and, you know, minor defilements under the law, like coming into contact with a dead body, or something like that.

He talks about the grossest kinds of sins. All the things he mentions are gross and terrible. I mean, when you find murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers on the

list, you know that Paul is really stretching to find some of the most grotesque and obscene forms of behavior.

Now, it might seem strange that Paul would make such a list as this. You might think he works against his purposes by excluding lesser violations and implying that the law is mainly for people who are gross violent. After all, James tells us elsewhere, of course, it's elsewhere in his epistle, that anyone who keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point breaks it all, is a lawbreaker.

And the purpose that James has is to show that unless you keep the law, every little detail of it, you're a lawbreaker. And even a small infraction is enough to condemn you. Paul has the same point in Galatians 3, when he says, anyone who is under the law is under the curse, because the law says, Cursed is he who does not continue in every word that is written as law.

And what Paul's arguing is, if you hope to be justified by the law, forget it, because any small violation of the law is enough to put you under its curse. Now, if Paul is trying to make the same point here, that is that even a small violation of the law makes a man a transgressor, and therefore the law is not on our side, he's not doing it very well, because he seems to only list big sins, which a person might say, oh, I killed my mother and my father. And therefore feel self-righteous.

Paul could have said, you know, for people who lust in their hearts, or covet their neighbor's property, or something like that, and that would have been something most people would be able to feel convicted by. It seems clear he's not making this list to make people feel convicted. He is not using the law that way here.

Interestingly, you know, Ray Comfort talks about verse 8. We know that the law is good if it's used lawfully, and he considers the lawful use of the law to be using it to convict people of sin. But the very use that Paul makes of the law here is not that. Paul doesn't use it here to convict people of sin, because the average Jew, or Christian, or even Gentile, could say, well, murderers of mothers, murderers of fathers, that's not me.

If Paul had said, you know, have you ever stolen a paperclip, well then that would be maybe convicting to them. But he talks only about gross violations, so his purpose here is not, as in some other places it is his purpose, but not here, to bring conviction that everyone is a lawbreaker. He has a different purpose here.

What he's trying to point out is that the law has a lawful or proper use, and that is to restrain people who are by nature evil. Now, Paul doesn't believe the law has any better use than that. He doesn't believe it justifies a person.

He doesn't believe that it's a tool of sanctification. He expressed that in other places. The law is not necessary for the Christian for salvation, sanctification, or any other thing.

The law is not necessary. It was a schoolmaster, needed only until faith came. But once faith came, Galatians 3 tells us, then we're no longer in the schoolmaster, we don't need it anymore.

And what he's arguing here is the law is not for righteous people. Christians are righteous people. They've been declared righteous by God.

They have been given the Holy Spirit who produces righteous behavior in them. If they are truly people of faith, then they love and they do the right thing that the law would require them to do anyway, and therefore they needn't be concerned about law, because there's a law written in their hearts. There's a law that tells them what's right and wrong and that inclines them to do the right thing.

It's written in their hearts. They are righteous by nature because they've been born again, and they now have a new nature. They're partakers of the divine nature.

They don't need law, because the law wasn't made to restrain people who are faithful to their wives. It was not made to restrain people who honor other people's property and rights. And that's what Christians are, righteous people who do pursue morality and righteousness.

Now, the law is useful for people who are horrible, for people who are sinners. And what he is saying here is, the law has a use, yes. It is to restrain people from misbehavior.

And anybody who wants to put himself under the law is basically saying he's one of those people who needs to be so restrained. What kinds of people does he want to restrain? Murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, homosexuals, horrible, perverted criminals. Is that the kind of person you're saying you are if you put yourself under the law? That's the kind of people that need the law.

He's basically saying you insult yourself by suggesting that the law is necessary in your life. Because if you were a righteous person, the law would have no use for you. It's not for righteous people.

It's for people who are debased, for people who are perverted, for people who are criminals, for people who are self-centered. And if you're one of those people, then you need the law, you're right. He's talking about people who want to teach the law to Christians.

And by implication, they're saying that they, the teachers and others, need to be under the law. And Paul's saying, essentially, if you want to put yourself under the law, maybe you should. Maybe you need it.

Maybe you're in the same class as people who are murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers. Fine. You need the law desperately, then, because it's made for people like

you.

But don't put me under that law, and don't put my Congress under that law, because they're righteous people, and the law isn't for righteous people. The law has nothing to say to righteous people. And, of course, he made that clear also in Galatians, chapter 5, that he says, if you're led by the Spirit, which is what Christians are supposed to be, then you do all these things.

A lot of joint peace generalists think, because, he says, against that, there's no law. There's no law against such things, and therefore, the law is not relevant to you. It is relevant to people who are whoremongers, and rapists, and murderers, and so forth, and liars, perjurers, and, you know, if you don't put yourself under the law, those are the people you're associating with.

Those are the people you're saying, that's the class you say you belong to. And if you belong to that class, then you better be under the law, because the law is necessary for restraining such criminals. But Christians are righteous.

They're not criminals. Therefore, to impose the law upon Christians is not a lawful use of the law. When he says, in verse 8, he says, we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully.

So, this word lawfully is found only in one other place in the Bible, and that's in 2 Timothy 2.5, but it's not used in the same sense, or to make the same point. In 2 Timothy 2.5, Paul says, and also, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. That word according to the rules is the same Greek word lawfully.

Obviously, he's making a different point using it there. So, only in the epistles to Timothy does this particular Greek word appear, and it's not even used in the same sense in the two places it's used. Here, in 1 Timothy 1a, where he says, if one uses it lawfully, lawfully apparently means in the proper way, the way it was intended to be used.

The law has a good purpose if use of law is restricted to the sense in which it was intended to be used. It's proper use, and it's proper use is to restrain and punish criminals, who are by nature lawbreakers, and therefore the law is there to tell them to stop breaking the law and to punish them when they do break it, but it's not made for people who are law-abiding. It's not made for people who have the law written in their hearts, who do by nature the things written in the law, and therefore to impose on Christians is an unlawful use of the law.

It's an improper use. It's not what was intended. God never intended the law to be imposed upon people who were already righteous because God had made them righteous by writing his law in their hearts.

Verse 12. Now, in verse 12, there's something underneath the whole section, and I'll point out some basic thoughts here. I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has enabled me, because he counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry.

I was looking at my watch instead of the text. I'll be right back. I don't want to keep you over time.

Okay. I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has enabled me, because he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man. But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly and unbelievably.

And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundantly, with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason, I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on him for everlasting life.

Now, unto the King eternal, immortal, and visible. To God, King James says, the only wise God, apparently manuscript difference, who alone is wise, excuse me, God, who alone is wise, King James is the only wise God. The honor and glory forever and ever unto him.

Okay, now in this section, Paul talks about his own conversion, his own reception of the mercy of God. In a sense, he may be implying that he used to be in that category of persons he just described. He just described those horrible hoodlums that belong under the constraint of the law.

However, he is not in that category anymore. Now, of course, Paul didn't do all these outward breaks of the law. He was a Pharisee, and he didn't murder anybody, or fornicate, or kidnap.

In a sense, he could be a kidnapper if he hauled off people from their homes when they were Christians and put them in jail. I guess there's a sense in which he was a man-stealer. He might have been convicted by some of these things listed, but the point is, however insolent and sinful he was before, he has obtained mercy.

And that mercy is not a mercy that puts him under the law or any other Christian who receives such mercy. Now, it's interesting, there's three things he says here that seem to imply the reason God chose to show mercy to Paul. And there is a seemingly unanswerable question that each of us can ask, and that is, why me? Why am I a Christian, and that person next door, that person in my same family, the person who was raised in the same church I was raised in, isn't a Christian? I was personally raised in a Baptist church.

There are boys who I was raised with from kindergarten. I remember meeting them in

kindergarten and knowing them all the way through high school. And they went to church as much as I did.

Their families were Christian families like mine was. They had every advantage I had, and yet when they got out of high school, they didn't walk with God. Some of them got into drugs, some of them got into illicit sex.

One of them in particular, I remember I knew him from kindergarten, he went to the same church with me from kindergarten through high school. He became a flasher, an exhibitionist. I mean, weirdos.

And I say, well, why did I, who had seemingly the same advantages as they and no more, turn out to serve God and they didn't? Or why was I privileged to be born in a Christian family or a Christian nation or a nation where Christianity was available, you know, instead of being born in Buffalo, Guinea or India or someplace where I would be unlikely to be a Christian? Why did I have this advantage? And the answer is, I don't know. There doesn't seem to be any answer to it. And Paul in Ephesians talks about how God selected us according to his own purpose and his own election and his own sovereignty.

I do believe that the Bible teaches that God's election was not entirely arbitrary, however. And here the Calvinists and the Arminians differ on this very point. Calvinism teaches that God selected without reference to any future behavior.

That is, although God foreknew the future behavior, that is not why he chose. He chose somebody to be saved without any reasons that we can discern. The only reason is in the hidden counsels of his own sovereignty.

He just decided, I'll choose you and not you. And it had nothing to do with the fact that he knew that you would be good and they would be bad. Because the very fact that you're good is only because he made you good in the first place and he didn't make that person be good.

And according to this Calvinistic teaching, you would have never believed at all if God hadn't put faith into you, if God had not brought you to birth from death and therefore, since you had nothing to do with the proposition, it was entirely in the sovereign will of God that you would be converted and whatever reasons he had are unknown to any of us. And some people say, well, maybe God chose me because he knew that I could be of great use to him because I have this talent or this skill or this advantage or whatever. I was born into such and such a family, I have a certain influence.

But you have to realize all those things God arranged for you. Whatever talents and skills and aptitudes and spheres of influence you may enjoy, those are all part of God's sovereign choice, too. Because he could have put you in a different family or given you a different set of faculties.

So, it seems unanswerable in one sense why God chose you and not someone else. And the Calvinist says, well, there's simply no reason that can be discerned. Now, the Arminian view, and I hold to it, is that God did have a reason that is explainable, and it seems to be hinted at or maybe stated clearly in Romans 9.29 where, in Romans 9.29, Paul says, whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.

It says that the ones that God predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son are those that he foreknew. It does not say what it was he foreknew about them, however. But it does say that his election of them was determined by foreknowledge, that is, knowing something in advance.

In 1 Peter 1.3, Peter says that Christians are elect, which means chosen, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. So, whatever our chosenness, our predestination is based on, it has something to do with God's foreknowledge. It has something to do with something he knew in advance.

Now, I have to admit, in both of those passages, which link God's chosen election with foreknowledge, neither passage says exactly what it was he foreknew. And therefore, we are left to deduce, and since it's not clear, that is why there's still room for disagreement between Calvinists and Arminians on this. But the Arminian position is that the reason that God chose you or me is because he foreknew that when you heard the gospel, you would respond to it.

Now, it's true that God himself drew you to Christ, and you couldn't respond to the gospel without him drawing you. But that does not mean that other people are not being drawn and resisting. Jesus said, no man can come to me except the Father who sent me drawn.

But that doesn't mean that God isn't trying to draw others who are refusing. God is, in fact. Jesus said to the Jews, how many times I would have gathered you like a hen gathers her chicks under her wing, but you would not.

He tried to draw them, but they wouldn't come. Stephen said to Sanhedrin, you people always resist the Holy Spirit. You see, another view of Calvinism is called irresistible grace.

And the idea is that if God chooses you without any seeming reason for it, but just chooses you because it pleases him to do so, then he draws you irresistibly. And if you happen to be one of the elect, you're going to be drawn, and you can't resist. You're going to come, because God's going to put it in your heart to come.

Now, there is some truth in some of these statements. Obviously, these things reflect a part of the truth, because the Bible does talk about God opening a person's heart or

hardening a person's heart. It says of Lydia, I think it is, in Acts chapter 16, that the Lord opened her heart to receive the gospel.

Okay, fair enough. We have to admit that when people become Christians, that God has had something to do with it. God has drawn them.

God has opened their hearts. God has done certain things. At the same time, we know that the Bible teaches some people resist God's drawing.

And they harden their hearts, and so forth. And so there is some mystery attached. We're not sure exactly to what extent God got me saved, to what extent my decision had something to do with it.

But we do know that God's foreknowledge was involved. And we do know that God holds people responsible if they don't believe the gospel. Therefore, they must have some freedom to choose, or else they could not be held responsible.

And we therefore would say, at least I would say, and maybe this is a conclusion that you won't agree with, but my conclusion is that God chose you or me because he foreknew that we would not resist his drawing as others would. That we would not harden our hearts against the gospel as others had. And that we would be responsive in this way to the gospel.

Now there is some support for this in Paul's words here. There's three reasons that he says God chose him to show mercy on. One is in verse 12.

I thank Jesus Christ our Lord who has enabled me because he counted me faithful. Now the enablement that God gave to Paul is called elsewhere grace. God gave him the enablement of grace because Paul was faithful.

Now this might, of course, refer to after his conversion. It's hard to say. He might have said he enabled me to become a Christian because he saw me and I was faithful to the light I had previously.

Now Paul was faithful to the light he had previously in some respects, up to a point. As a Pharisee, he was zealous for what he believed was God's will. And in fact, if you look at 2 Timothy 1.3, Paul says that his ancestors, who were also Pharisees, also served God according to the best of their knowledge.

1 Timothy 1.3 says, I thank God whom I served with a pure conscience as my forefathers did. Now he indicates that his forefathers, presumably meaning his father, his grandfather, and so forth, who were all Pharisees, they also served God with a clear conscience, although they didn't know Jesus. They apparently didn't live long enough to know Jesus.

But it was possible for a Jew, prior to the time that the gospel came to him, to serve God out of a pure conscience. And Paul was probably, as he indicates in some places, Philippians and Galatians, as zealous as they came for God. He was faithful to what he knew, up to a point.

I say up to a point because prior to his conversion, he started feeling the conviction of the Holy Spirit and he resisted it for a while. We know that because when Jesus finally said, you're kicking against the bricks, I'm trying to goad you and you're resisting. But at that point, he stopped resisting.

And, for the most part, Paul was a man, even before his conversion, who, though he did some pretty stupid and broad things, he says he did them in ignorance. And that's the second reason he gives for receiving mercy, in verse 13. But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly and unbelievably.

He wasn't like some of the Pharisees, and they are members of the Sanhedrin, who knew who Jesus was and still didn't want anyone else to know. They wanted to suppress the truth in their unrighteousness. Paul describes the attitude of many unbelieving Jews as being just that.

That they suppress the truth in their unrighteousness. Paul was not one who suppressed the truth. He simply didn't understand or believe or know the truth.

He was ignorant. But when Jesus made his presence unmistakable to Paul, Paul no longer sought to suppress it. He embraced it.

He submitted to it. He was ignorant previously. And so his ignorance was taken into consideration in that God said, OK, you're an insolent man, you're a wicked man, but I know you don't fully understand what you're doing.

Remember when Jesus on the cross said, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. Well, some of them did, and some didn't. I believe the ones that didn't know are the ones that God forgave, that God showed mercy to.

Paul says, God showed mercy to me because I didn't know what I was doing. I was ignorant. And then the third reason he gives in verse 16 is that for this reason I obtained mercy.

That didn't mean Jesus Christ might show all love and suffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on him to everlasting life. No, it's to basically set an example of how great a sinner Christ is able to forgive. As an encouragement to others who may afterward be in the position to wonder whether their sins are too great.

Paul says, well, look at me. I was a blasphemer, verse 13. A persecutor, about as bad as you can get, persecuting God's people.

An insolent man, the word insolent man there in verse 13, in the King James is injurious. Neither word is exactly what the Greek says, but the Greek word is hard to translate. The commentators say that this Greek word just means about as despicable as they come.

Having no virtues, having no good things to commend, essentially. And so he's basically saying I was about as bad as they come. And yet God showed mercy to me because I was ignorant.

And so he showed mercy on me so that he might encourage others. He made me a pattern or an example for others who would afterwards believe. So that no matter how wicked people are, most of them have not been persecutors of the church.

Most have not been blasphemers. Most have not been insolent men. And even those who have been can expect the same mercy I've experienced as they come to Christ.

And that's what he's essentially saying. Now in verse 15, we have this first faithful saying. And I pointed out yesterday there's quite a few things in the pastoral that are called faithful sayings.

Just a second. Mercy and grace are overlapping concepts, but not identical. Let me suggest a definition or a difference between the two that I've heard a long time ago that makes sense to me, though I'm not sure that they're lexical.

I'm not sure that the Greek compares these differences. But someone said that mercy is when you are not given the punishment you deserve, and grace is when you are given good things that you don't deserve. And while, again, I don't know if that would bear up in the Greek lexicons, it certainly seems to fit the usage of those words that I'm familiar with in the Bible.

So I would at least tentatively stand by that difference. Mercy is when one does not receive the negative consequences that they deserve. And grace is when they receive positive benefits that they did not deserve.

In both cases, a person is not getting what they deserve. But mercy stresses the fact that the evil thing that they deserve is not brought against them. Grace, the good thing that they don't deserve, is given to them.

Was there another hand there? No? Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah. Romans 8.29 is the passage that says, Whom he foreknew, he also did predict.

Apparently I said 9.29. That is not correct. Romans 8.29. Thanks, John. Okay.

In verse 15, the first of the faithful sayings of Paul in the pastoralist, and worthy of all acceptance, is that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Now, that much is thought by many to be part of a creedal statement of the early church, just as chapter 3,

verse 16 seems to embody an ancient creedal statement of the church. Some believe that the statement, Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, was a well-known saying in the church of Paul saying it's a good one.

It's a faithful one. It's a true one. You know this saying, and let me tell you something, it's one you can trust.

It's worthy to be accepted. Now, whether that was a creedal statement that Paul is quoting, or whether he's originating it, of course, I think cannot be demonstrated. It's only a guess, because there's no reason in the world that Paul couldn't have just originated on the spot, if it's well enough, into discussion.

But it is true that the statement, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is an extremely succinct statement of the soul of the gospel message. It mentions salvation. It mentions the Incarnation.

His coming into the world suggests that he came from heaven, therefore it suggests the deity of Christ. It suggests that the persons that Jesus came to save are not the righteous, but sinners. And therefore, it is one of the most succinct gospel statements that can be had.

And it may be for that reason that scholars often think, well, it's so good, it is so brief and so full of meaning, that it no doubt served as a doctrinal or creedal statement of the early Christians. But we don't know that, I mean, Paul was quite capable of coming up with gems on the top of his head, too. Certainly the last part, of whom I am chief, is not believed to be part of a creedal statement, but a personal statement on Paul's part.

And, of course, it is possible that he was quoting the creedal statement, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and then he adds his own personal note, and I'm the worst of them. Paul was accustomed to using superlatives in speaking of his own wretchedness. In 1 Corinthians 15 he says, I am the least of the apostles, I am not worthy to be called an apostle.

In 2 Corinthians he says, I am nothing. He says, I'm not a whip behind the chief of the apostles, though I be nothing. And he states in very strong terms that he has a low opinion of himself.

Here also, I'm chief of sinners. Now you might say, boy, that's a little overstatement. How could Paul be chief of sinners when he didn't actually, you know, is he worse than Adolf Hitler, or Charles Madison, or Jeffrey Dahmer, or whatever? And Paul apparently felt like he's at least no better.

He's no better than the worst of them. He never really got over the sense of responsibility for his past, that he had persecuted Christians. Even very late in his life, writing in the pastoral epistles, he mentions his persecution of Christians as something

that weighed upon him, and could not cease to affect his self-opinion.

You know, Paul had walked with God for, who knows, 50 years by this time, maybe? Ah, no, no, no, probably, well, well over 30. Maybe between 30 and 40 years at this time. And, you know, he was a fairly sanctified individual.

He was a pretty godly guy. But he never lost sight of what evil he was capable of before he had grace. And no Christian should ever think himself incapable of falling to the grossness of sins, when not to himself, because as Paul said in Romans 7, in me that is in my flesh there dwells no good thing.

Still, as a Christian, there dwells no good thing in my natural man. And insofar as I neglect to walk in the Spirit, I am subject to my natural man, which is as bad as any other person's natural man. I'm no better.

And Paul is suggesting, I think, that if he were to walk away from the faith, if he were to neglect to walk in the Spirit, that he's still at this late age capable of falling into the same kinds of traps as before of sin, because he's not really any better than he used to be. He doesn't say, I was the chief of sinners. He says, I am the chief of sinners.

And I believe he doesn't mean that he is currently committing sins. But by nature, in his flesh, he's as much a sinner as he ever was. The thing is, he's not subject.

He doesn't have to live under the flesh. He can walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh. But if he did fulfill the desires of the flesh, they would be as gross and debauched as they ever were.

What was that? That verse that says, the heart is desperate and wicked about all things and knowing. Huh? Jeremiah? Yeah, I thought you said that wouldn't apply to Christians, would it? The heart is not the same thing as the flesh. It is true that Jeremiah says of his generation, that their heart is desperately wicked and deceitful about all things and so forth.

And he'll get nauseated. And I would say that a Christian's heart can be pure. A Christian's heart can be good when we love the Lord with all our heart.

But see, that's not the same thing as talking about our flesh, or the nature that manifests itself in our members when we're not in the Spirit. The reason our hearts can be good is because the Holy Spirit changes our hearts and gives us a good heart. When I say changes our hearts, I mean as we are under his influence, our heart is good.

But if we walk away from or resist his influence, our heart can revert. Our heart is probably roughly analogous to the soul and the mind in the Scripture. I mean, the words soul and mind and heart, I think, are used, I would say, fairly interchangeably.

There might be some hairline distinctions between them, but they speak of the basic character of the person and their inner life. And that inner life is subject to the influence of the Spirit, on the one hand, or the flesh, on the other. And if we don't submit to the Spirit, we're still subject to the flesh.

Therefore, my heart, my character, my soul, my mind can be carnal. It can be fleshly, and it can be as evil as ever. As soon as I cease to allow the Spirit of God, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to make me free from the law of sin and death, which Paul talks about in Romans 8. So it could apply to this, if we're not walking away from the Spirit.

Right, yeah. I could be the chief of sinners tomorrow, if I just decided to apostatize. I may have lived my whole life chaste, faithful to my wife, a loving parent, a person who pays his bills on time and does not cheat people, and so forth.

I can do all those things until today, and decide I don't want to be a Christian anymore. And then I could be a total bank robber, whoremonger, whatever the worst possible things are, you can imagine. I could become those things.

It is in the nature of the beast, which is in us all, to do that, if we do not depend upon the Spirit on a regular basis. Okay? Paul is aware of that. Okay, this doxology, as they are called in verse 17, is fairly like Paul in other places.

Whenever there is an ascription of glory to God, sometimes Paul breaks into these, he's done so in Romans, I think in 1 Corinthians, and he does so in various places. He'll ascribe glory to God, glory and honor, and wisdom, and whatever. These kinds of statements are called doxology, from the Greek word doxa, which means glory.

A doxology is an ascription of glory to God. Paul does that from time to time, because he just loves glory so much, and occasionally when he thinks of certain concepts that really turn him on, he just bursts into spontaneous praise of God. And that's there in verse 17, to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, to God who alone is wise.

Again, the King James says, the only wise God. That carries somewhat a little different meaning. Only wise God means that there may be other gods, but none of them are wise.

But God who alone is wise means that there's only one God, and he's also the only person in the universe who's wise. Probably the New King James is to be preferred. God who alone is wise.

Be honor and glory forever and ever, amen. Let's go on. We've got to finish up this chapter anyway, so I'm only a chapter behind the schedule.

Verse 18, this charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having

faith and a good conscience, which some have you rejected concerning the faith, which suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. Several things in this passage need to be mentioned. First of all, Paul talks in verse 18 about prophecies that were previously made concerning Timothy.

He does not state the occasion that these prophecies were made, though they may well have been at his ordination, because in chapter 4, 1 Timothy 4.14, Paul says, Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, with the lay out of hands of the presbytery. Now, the word presbytery is from the Greek word presbyteros, elder, and presbytery simply means the council of elders, the eldership of the church. What church was Timothy ordained in by the elders? I don't know.

Presbytery church, I guess. But since Timothy's mystery originated in Lystra, and there was a church there, and there were elders there, it's likely that when Paul decided to take Timothy with him, that he was sent off from his home church in Lystra with the lay out of hands, and certain prophecies uttered over him on that occasion. It has become customary, because the book of Acts demonstrates it, that when missionaries are sent out, that their home church lays hands upon them, the elders lay hands upon them and send them out.

Actually, Paul and Barnabas were sent out in this manner. In Acts chapter 13, when the Holy Spirit spoke and said, Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul, for the work that I have called them. It says the elders of the church, it doesn't use the word elders, but the leaders of the church that prayed and fasted, and then they sent them off with the lay out of hands.

And that has become customary even to the present time. When I and six other families were sent from the Calvary Chapel in Santa Cruz to start this school in 1983, the eldership laid hands upon us and sent us out, and it's fairly customary to do that when sending out workers. It's probable that what is referred to here is the time when Timothy was first set apart to go with Paul.

He had been a young Christian in the church, a good reputation. Paul came to town the second time, said, I want to take this guy with me. The elders of the church, I think this is the proper scenario, the elders of the church laid their hands on him, sent him off as a missionary along with Paul.

At that time, prophecies were uttered over him. The first time I visited the Mennonite church here in town, they were sending off a young man to a YWAM DTS in Amsterdam, and the elders and others got around him and laid hands on him, and there was a session there where they prophesied over him. Certain prophecies were given over him that really impressed me, that this church was a spiritual church and everything.

I think that that probably was fairly customary in the early church as well. Although I don't recall that prophecies were uttered over us when we left Calvary Chapel, Santa Cruz to start this school, yet I received a personal prophecy from a brother, who was a ministry, I appreciate it, just prior to our leaving to go to school, and it was a prophecy that seemed to be relevant to the school, it seemed to be a genuine one. So when men are sent out from their home church to establish something or to do missionary work, the laying on of hands, sometimes accompanied with prophecy, is a fairly biblical thing, and practiced still to this day.

Now, what was the content of these prophecies uttered over Timothy? One of those presbytery laymen said, we don't know, but Paul says in 1 Timothy 1.18 that those prophecies are going to be useful to Timothy if he meditates on them and remembers them, they will help him to wage a good warfare. And the warfare he's involved in is against Satan, and maybe more particularly towards false teachers who are following Satan and teaching Satan's lies. In order to stand as a young man against the tide of deception and so forth that was going on in the church of Ephesus, Timothy had to have a warrior's courage.

And in case he ever tended to lose heart, you should remember those prophecies that were uttered over him. It may be that some of you have had personal prophecies uttered over you. If so, and if they were genuine, because I don't believe every time this kind of thing has happened that... I've heard people prophesy over it, I have reason to suspect the prophecies were not genuine, but if so, it is possible that you have been able to call to mind those prophecies again.

I know, I think John Twohy has shared with me a prophecy that was uttered over him when he was in the wild west, It's good to pull it out and read it again from time to time for encouragement, because sometimes circumstances are discouraging, and you come back to that thing which God said over you, and it encourages you. I remember the prophecy I mentioned that was uttered over me, was given by the only guy in the church who I recognized as having a real prophetic gift, although other people prophesied in the church, I suspected some of them. He was a guy who I respected, because of the kinds of words he gave me, I was impressed by him.

He called me on the phone and said, I have a word from the Lord for you, and a scripture. He said, first I gave you the scripture, and when he said the word scripture, a scripture reference came to my mind. I may have told you this story before.

The scripture reference was Joshua 1.9, and usually I was suspicious when people said they had prophesied for me, because I remember when I was single, three different prophetesses came up and told me that I was supposed to marry them, and I knew that at least two of them had to be wrong, and I think all three were wrong, I didn't marry any of them, but the point is that personal prophecies, you take them with a grain of salt,

sometimes. But this guy, I trusted more than the average, and when he said I have a prophecy and a scripture for you, I said, in my own head, in the back of my mind, the scripture reference, Joshua 1.9, came to my mind, and there was no reason in the world I should have selected that one. As it turned out, that was the scripture.

He said, let me find it here, he said it's in Joshua, and then he was looking for it, and he says, it's in the first chapter, and it seemed like he was looking for an intolerably long period of time before that verse, and I said, is it by any chance verse 9? Because that's the verse that had come to mind, and he says, yeah, that's part of it, that's part of it. And the passage was Joshua 1, verses 5 through 9, which I would not share with you except for the relevance to this very issue of personal prophecies being useful in warfare, and many times I've called to mind this scripture and the prophecy he gave me, especially the prophecy was very simple, it said God was going to give me a gift, and that if I maintained a proper, humble attitude and so forth, I could maintain it, but if I did not, I would lose it, and I understood the gift to be the school, and so far, it seems to be true, but the scripture that he gave me was this, Joshua 1.5-9, No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do all according to the law which Moses my servant commanded you.

Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Have I not commanded you to be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Now, you can understand how encouraging that particular word is, and the interesting thing is, anyone could have given me that scripture, or any other scriptures would be an encouragement if they were coming from their own spirit. What I found is, since it was a word that already, the reference came to my mind before he told me what the reference was.

And he turned to that reference independently of my mentioning it. I mean, he turned to Joshua 1, and he was looking for it at first, and he said, no, it was part of it. I mean, I felt the Lord did that to confirm to me that this is not one I had to have doubts about.

You know, there are a lot of prophecies I've heard that I wondered. You know, they were nice, nice words, but you never know, is it really from God or from this person's own spirit? But I felt there was sufficient inward confirmation from that experience that on many occasions, I've been in warfare, as it were, and I had to remember, no man should be able to stand against you all the days of your life. You know, and many times the war

was with people.

And it's been an encouragement. I've been able to wage a better warfare for having had that word than if I had not had it. And Timothy apparently had some kind of encouraging word of prophecy had been given to him, and Paul said, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by then you may wage the good warfare.

There apparently were some very positive, prophetic things said over him on the occasion when he was sent out with Paul, and he said to keep those in mind. And I would encourage you, if you've received genuine prophecies personally uttered over you that give you some sense of your destiny in God or whatever, that you do not forget them, and that you call them to mind that will help you in your warfare. He mentions two persons, which maybe I should wait.

No, I should finish this. We'll just run a little over time. Two persons that have given up faith and a good conscience.

I mentioned that verse 19 parallels verses 5 and 6. In verses 5 and 6 and here, it talks about the need for faith and a good conscience, and that some have put those away, or some have departed from them. Two men are mentioned who have made their faith shipwrecked, which suggests that they are no longer Christians, which again says something about the question of eternal security. And by the way, there's quite a few passages in the pastoralist that would seem to conflict with the doctrine of eternal security.

You can't make your faith shipwrecked if you don't have any faith to shipwreck. If you have a faith that can be shipwrecked, then it suggests that you have faith and it can also be shipwrecked, which obviously does not seem to agree with eternal security.