

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

“The Person of Timothy”

1 Timothy 1:1-2

We are going to do just the first two verses of 1 Timothy Chapter 1:1-2, **“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope. To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Paul is the author of 1 Timothy. It’s one of the Pastoral Epistles along with 2 Timothy and Titus. They are called Pastoral Epistles because they are instructing the church on how to conduct itself. Not that Timothy and Titus were exactly pastors in our current modern sense of the word, but that they were giving ministry and help to churches to function well and you see a lot of instruction in these books and we will get to enjoy.

We have heard a lot about Paul in the teachings by Dale on the many books that he’s taught that were written by Paul. He’s done series of who Paul was and about him. So I thought this morning we would just focus on Timothy.

Timothy, the recipient of this book, called “my true child in the faith.” Timothy and Titus, the only two Pastoral Epistle recipients were called this by Paul, “my true son in the faith.” My version says, “my true child in the faith,” maybe other versions that you have say “my true son in the faith.” The word can mean either. Child is often used to mean child but depending on the context it can mean son. I think this is a good context for meaning son, because child kind of has this connotation of immaturity with it but son is someone who has been grown up and I think this is true of Timothy at this time.

So we will look at this phrase “my true son in the faith” this morning. We are going to first look at it in reverse order. We will first look at Timothy being in the faith then we will look at Timothy as a son then we will look at Timothy as being true.

Timothy was in the faith. Timothy had a family, his physical family. His earthly family can be seen in Acts 16. We’re going to be flipping around some passages this morning, hopefully, you are ready for that. In Acts 16, we learn something about Timothy at the beginning of the second missionary journey of Paul. Paul is described as coming to Derbe.

Paul came also to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, **Acts 16:2, “and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”**

So we see something about Timothy’s family, we see their cultural background. Their cultural background was, mother Jewish, father Greek. He was bi-cultural, if you will. There are people today who are bicultural, and they can move freely and well in different cultures.

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Timothy had a Jewish background from his mother and was comfortable in a Jewish setting and had a Greek background from his father and was comfortable in a Greek setting, Greek culture. This made him quite valuable to Paul in the ministry on the missionary journey that they were about to embark on because as they were going to go to the Jews first and then also to the Greeks. So when he encountered Jewish people with Timothy, Timothy could do well in that setting as well as with the Greeks.

You have a cultural background, maybe you don't even realize that you've grown up in a cultural setting, in America, and there's even subcultures within a larger culture. My subculture, my parents, my mother is from Brooklyn, my father is from just across the river in northern New Jersey and they have a culture and I'm somewhat familiar with that culture through them. My dad was also in the Air Force, he retired from the Air Force, and that's a subculture within this country and I've grown somewhat used to that in my childhood. My wife on the other hand is from Georgia and there is a subculture within the south that she is very comfortable with. So this has benefited us in different settings with different people. We have been able to conduct ourselves according to the culture background that we are familiar with as well as here in California. The only problem is when we had a wedding and we have the cultures come together we almost need an interpreter, but we manage to survive that undertaking. The cultural background we have helps us and it helped Timothy. Whatever cultural background you have helps you in being able to relate to certain people and the Lord can use that just as he used Timothy and his background.

Now about religious backgrounds, their religious background was Jewish and Greek, but particularly Jewish. We learn of this background of Timothy's with his mother and his grandmother in the book of 2 Timothy, so if you look at 2 Timothy 1:5 we learn a little bit of this. **2 Timothy 1:5, "For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well."**

So Paul saw Timothy's faith first resting with his grandmother and mother and they imparted the Scriptures to Timothy from an early age. **2 Timothy 3:14-15, "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."**

So Timothy had knowledge of the Scripture from an early age and this helped him. If you have that in your life that benefits you. If you don't have that in your life, which I didn't have that in my life growing up, it still helps me to sympathize and understand people that don't have that in their life. But having that is a blessing and this is what we are trying to, I think, accomplish with children as they grow up, to help them inculcate the Scriptures, the values of the Scriptures, in their life so that at some point, like with Timothy, they can embrace Christ.

On to Timothy's family. His spiritual family. You've seen his physical family, now his spiritual family and his conversion. His conversion is most likely found in Acts 14:6-7 where Paul and his companions fled the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding regions and in verse 7 they continued to preach the gospel. So they fled to Lystra which is where Timothy was from and the gospel comes to Lystra and very likely to Timothy and to his family there in Lystra in this point in time. This is about a couple of years prior to the second ministry journey that Paul took Timothy on.

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So having the sacred Scripture brought to Timothy in his younger years helped Timothy to serve to bring him to faith. When he was instructed about the Messiah, who Christ is, he could embrace Jesus as the Messiah. The same thing with children, we are hoping to bring them the values of the Scripture, the knowledge of the Scripture. Who knows when that point is going to be when they will be in a position to really believe in Jesus and trust Him, that's between them and the Lord. But what we are hoping to do with children is to bring that knowledge of Christ to them so they can be in a better position to embrace Him when they have that conviction within their hearts, He is true and they want to follow Him with their life. That helps them, that helped Timothy and put him in a good position when he learned about the Messiah and was able to embrace him in Acts 14.

Then there's his companions. He had companions, a number of them. I bring this to your attention because there's this kind of thought that some people have that Paul ministered to Timothy in a one-on-one discipleship relationship, somewhat devoid of companions around them, and that they just spent all their time together. Well this really wasn't the case. They were working with each other in settings among other people very much like we do here in our church.

If we look at Acts 18:5 we see some of this. We find him with Silas **“but when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia,”** that's when Paul was in Corinth they came and visited him, **“Paul began devoting himself completely to the word.”** So here we find Timothy with Silas. In Acts 19:22, we find Timothy with Erastus. **“And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.”** Then in Acts 20:4, **“And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”** So there's a whole group of people, and as we find Timothy ministering and moving we find him with other people, growing with others.

I think this is how discipleship is best done, with the context of other people. This is how Jesus chose to do it. He recruited a group of people around him, not just one person. So this is Timothy's faith. Timothy's faith was embraced, helped by his knowledge of the Scripture at a young age and then he embraced it as a young adult and was able to join Paul on his missionary journey early on in his young career.

Next, Timothy was considered as a son by Paul. Here's how he was considered a son, in a spiritual sense, obviously. He learned from Paul. As we look at 1 Corinthians 4 we will see just how much he learned from Paul. Paul wrote the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 4:16, **“Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.”**

So Paul was encouraging them to imitate him, and here's how he went about helping them to imitate him, since he imitated Christ. 1 Corinthians 4:17, **“For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.”**

So Paul sent Timothy so they could learn of him and imitate him. Timothy had learned of Paul and had embraced Paul's ministry and teachings to such a degree that he could be a representative going to the Corinthians, that's how much he learned.

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Hopefully you're here in our fellowship as a learner, that's what the word disciple means, a learner. And as you learn and grow then you will be well served. Learning is true for each one of us. None of us have the knowledge of the scriptures that we need to have, none of us know about the Lord in the ways that we need to, we all need to be learners. As opposed to conducting ourselves in a way that just reinforces our preconceived ideas and our own bias. It would be very easy to just teach things that you already agree with and you would say "oh yeah. that is wonderful, I agree with that," but that is not always conducive to learning. Sometimes things need to get reinforced but learning assumes that we don't know everything that we need to know and need to learn more and just reinforcing preconceived ideas does not accomplish learning.

Timothy wasn't just a learner of Paul he was a laborer with Paul, he learned from Paul and he labored with Paul. This is in Philippians 2 and there is quite a lot of information about Timothy in Philippians chapter 2 so I'm going to read you Philippians 2:19-24, **"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly."**

In verse 22, we find Timothy described as of proven worth and that he served in furtherance of the gospel using the same analogy as a child serving his father. So this serving with Paul in the gospel was laboring as a son. You know how sons labor with their fathers, they sometimes take up the same careers, go into business with their fathers. Sometimes for evil, like in Iran with Saddam Hussein, for tyrannical reasons they will join with their father and conduct themselves in evil.

Well this just sort of happens sometimes, not even that the father has intended this. Just like learning, it just sort of happens in the son-father relationship whether we plan it or we don't plan it, the sons begin to learn and embrace the things of the fathers for good or for bad. And Paul used that analogy to show how Timothy embraced and worked with him as a son, laboring.

He wasn't just a laborer with Paul, he was a liaison for Paul. We find this in Acts 19:22 and 1 Thessalonians 3:2, we also find this in Philippians 2:19-23. Phil 2:19 says, **"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition."** That's Paul hoping, from Rome, to send Timothy to the Philippians or verse 19, **"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you."**

This isn't just to send him across town, this is to send him quite a long distance. This was a large undertaking for Timothy to visit the Philippians and took quite a long time to get there. So he was a liaison for Paul just like sons can represent their fathers as agents. Even the Son of God was sent into the world by His father to be a mediator on behalf of man to God. Fathers send sons, Paul sent Timothy as a liaison.

So hopefully you are here as a learner, someone who is looking to grow in knowledge and following the Lord more and more closely.

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As you do that you will begin to want to apply the Scripture, which tells you to minister and serve other people, labor for the sake of the gospel, join with others in ministry. Then this will end up having you take on certain responsibilities and roles like Timothy did as the liaison with Paul. He took some responsibilities to go and minister to others, as you will. Also, as you labor you will gain additional responsibilities.

Let me share just how this has happened in my life. When I became a Christian I didn't think I'm going to do what I'm doing now this morning, that was the furthest thing from my mind. I did not plan this out, what I did was I began learning and as I learned I began to see that I should take responsibility and take opportunities to serve others. I was excited about the opportunity to help others to know Christ as I had known Christ.

So the first opportunity that availed itself to me was in our Awana ministry in 1981. I was a leader in our Awana ministry. I had no training, I kind of joined in the middle of the year because they needed help and I said, "Oh I will help out." So without any training, without any knowledge I was given the leadership over a group of four boys at the time and at the time I considered myself the world's worst Awana leader. I had no idea what I was doing. We'd get together in our book time and I said to them, "What am I supposed to do?" And they would say, "You are suppose to review our verses." And I would say "Okay, what are your verses?" and I reviewed them and so they liked me and I like them and we got along but I didn't know what I was doing.

That didn't stop me, I knew I should be trying to help them and so I tried. As time went on I got a little better at it, I think, I hope, and one thing led to the next and then people said why don't you start doing this or why don't you take the responsibility for that and I said, "Okay. if that would help." So I did, and here I am today. Now you probably don't want to be where I am today, but hopefully as you seek to learn and labor what tends to happen is that people who do this end up taking additional responsibility because we need help.

There's no way that the church back in Timothy's day or the church today is going to accomplish all that we are desiring to do without people to do it and people to take the leadership to accomplish that end. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few as Jesus said and that will always be true and in order to get things done we need people to do it and the people to take the initiative to be willing to take leadership to accomplish it. Timothy was willing to do that and so he was considered a son by Paul.

So he wasn't just in the faith, he wasn't just a son, he was also true. Another word for true would be sincere. He was well meaning in his following. His sincerity is shown in several ways and we are going to move through these ways quickly here.

His sincerely was seen in his consistency. Maybe first and foremost, his sincerity is seen in his consistency. Remember 1 Corinthians 4:17? What did that say? It said Timothy was a faithful brother. He was described by Paul, as being faithful. He was consistent, he could be counted on and that's why he was sent to Corinth because Paul counted on him to bring the task that was needed to be done, to the Corinthians. And we have ministries happening because people are faithful. And this is a great test of their sincerity if they are faithful they are consistent in their ministry. Timothy was faithful.

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So this morning when I got up I did not even think of our music group not showing up, for example. I counted on them being here. I didn't think, "well, I need to have a plan B just in case they don't show up." I didn't think, "maybe I should give them a wake up call." I just assumed they would be here and they were. And so with Sunday school teachers and so much else that's going on in ministry, we need people who are consistent and faithful in order for the things that God is needing to do in this fellowship to be accomplished. And when we are consistent and faithful that demonstrates our sincerity of faith. That we are not just fooling ourselves but that we are sincere. It's true in our lives.

Timothy wasn't just consistent, he was concerned. Incidentally, you know how consistent he was? You look at the books of the Bible that Paul wrote, many of them were written with Timothy. Timothy is found as being with Paul in the book of Philippians, 2 Corinthians, Philemon, 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, we find him consistently in those books.

His concern for the Philippians is found in chapter 2 Philippians 2:19, **"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition."**

Timothy had a unique concern for the Philippians, so much so that he was called a kindred spirit, or a sole mate, if you will. They joined in having a similar attitude of concern for the Philippians. Hopefully there are people in your life that you can join with being concerned for the welfare of others. That your close friends, or some people who join with you in ministry, have with you a joint concern for the care of others as a kindred spirit. Your concern for others demonstrates your sincerity. If you have this concern, not just for how it all affects you but the welfare of other people this demonstrates your faith as sincere. This demonstrated Timothy's faith was sincere.

This concern was built on his commitment, verse 21, Timothy had a commitment and here was his commitment **"for they all seek after their own interest and not of those of Christ Jesus."** Instead of seeking after his own interest, Timothy's interest was seeking after the interest of Christ Jesus.

And this is how you can be faithful in your sincerity, your commitment is by when things get hard. And they will, people will not always appreciate you or speak well of you. If you have a commitment to not seek after your own interest but those of Christ what will happen is that will not wipe you out if you are not feeling well appreciated by people because you are seeking to serve the interest of Christ. Having a concern for other people, not just seeking your own interest.

Now granted there are some people who need to grow in wisdom. In fact, we all need to grow in wisdom. There's sometimes we need to conduct ourselves more wisely as we seek to be concerned and minister to other people but I suspect there will be coming a time when we will find ourselves unappreciated. When we are unappreciated, if we are not seeking to serve for our own interest but for the interest of Christ then we will be able to be consistent and move through that, like Timothy moved through that, and endure. He was committed to the sake of Christ.

He also had a strong character. That is seen right off the bat in Acts 16 which we read earlier and will look back to. Acts 16:2, Timothy was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.

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That was how he was described. Philippians 2:22 puts it this way, **“you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel.”** He had proven worth, he had character, he was well spoken of. His character was well seen by the church of Lystra and Iconium and they could speak of his reputation.

And this character comes from the fruit of the spirit. The fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. This godly character, this holiness within our lives, is evidence of our sincerity. When God’s Spirit is working in our lives to bring about holiness that’s not something that the flesh can produce or that we can produce from our selfishness. That comes from God’s Spirit changing us and making us into loving people, joyful people, patient people and onward.

There are many things that the Holy Spirit has been claimed to be doing on the earth today. The Holy Spirit is doing this, the Holy Spirit is doing that, but there’s one thing that cannot be faked and that is the Holy Spirit bringing about this kind of godly character in our lives. The love, the joy, the peace, the patience, the kindness, the goodness, the gentleness, the faithfulness, the self-control, these things in our lives come about by God’s Spirit working within us and the deeds of the flesh are not that and they cannot be faked. Only God produces holiness.

Incidentally there’s this passage in the book of Exodus, which speaks of the plagues of Egypt. Of the plagues of Egypt, the first two and a half were reproduced by the magicians. The people of the earth can reproduce certain things but they cannot reproduce godly character. God’s Spirit produces that and that is evidence of our sincerity. So if you see yourself growing in godliness and being able to be more patient and kind and peaceful and joyful and loving, that’s evidence of sincerity, sincerity of faith that you’re not deceiving yourself.

Next is Timothy’s circumcision. Timothy was circumcised in Acts 16:3, **“Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”** So apparently there was an issue that the Jews knew about and for some reason his father did not allow his mother to have Timothy circumcised and so he was uncircumcised.

Now remember this circumcision that Timothy underwent was for ministry purposes not because of salvation, because Paul made it absolutely clear that circumcision gained nothing for someone’s eternal destiny, their salvation. This was for the purpose of ministering well to those Jews that he would be encountering. That was why Timothy allowed this to be done.

This was before the days of anesthesia. So there was no way to avoid the pain and suffering of this. It was also before the days of medical knowledge had progressed to know exactly why infections result, and complications can occur from this and there was a risk that was being taken here. There is a risk being taken even in our day and age but back then the risk was greater, the scalpels weren’t quite so sharp. So Paul had Timothy circumcised for the sake of serving others and that was a great personal sacrifice for Timothy.

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Why would he do this? Because he saw the benefit of service to others as outweighing his own personal cost. I'm sure he did this not grudgingly but willingly believing that this was going to benefit the work of God. And undoubtedly it did because it winds up in the Scriptures for us. His circumcision is a testimony to us that we can endure personal sacrifice for God's sake for ministering on His behalf.

As you look back at your life hopefully you can look at something in your life and say I made personal sacrifices for the sake of serving Christ and ministering to others. When you can look back at your life and say I chose personal sacrifices for the sake of ministering to others then that is evidence that your faith is sincere and that you are not deluding yourself.

What sacrifices are we willing to undergo? How much effort are we willing to put out in order to serve others. What things were we willing to suffer for the sake of others. Hopefully, as we look at our lives we can look at something that we are able to say, "because of seeking to serve the Lord in ministry to others I did this. And I did this at a personal sacrifice." If you can look back at your life and see some of those things then those are evidences of sincerity. If they are really not there then you have to wonder, "am I doing this because of my own personal interest rather than in the interest of Christ?" His circumcision is a testimony to his commitment and his willingness to suffer for the sake of others in serving the lord. Hopefully we can follow that same pattern of being willing to suffer in serving others, to give of ourselves.

He's also courageous. I know you might have some Scriptures in your mind, like 2 Timothy 1:7, where Paul wrote to Timothy "**God did not give you a spirit of timidity, but of power, love and discipline.**" Which kind of leads you to believe that Paul had problems with being timid. Or 1 Timothy 4:12, "**let no one look down on your youthfulness.**" He had to be encouraged to not let that happen. Or even 1 Timothy 5:23, "**take a little wine for the sake of your stomach.**" Who knows what emotional things were within Timothy that caused him to need that?

But whatever may be going on internally within him to cause him to be timid he did not allow that to derail him. He continued to pursue the things of God even in the face of opposition. So he did not allow fear to overcome him, he persevered and pressed through that. We find his courage notably in Acts 17:13-14, "**But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds. Then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there.**"

These Thessalonian Jews had already run them out of Thessalonica, now their running Paul out of Berea, opposing and agitating the crowds, opposing Paul. Timothy and Silas had the courage and remained there in spite of the risk that meant for them as associates of Paul. So Timothy had the courage to be in a difficult situation in spite of what that might have meant for him and in spite of maybe some fear that he suffered in his flesh. He was courageous to the point of captivity. And his captivity is seen in Hebrews 13:23, describes him as having been released, "**Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.**"

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So Timothy was willing to even persevere to the point of imprisonment. And he could have, at the end of his imprisonment, when he was released, said “I’ve had it, it started off bad, it ended off bad, I’m out of here, I’m folding the tent, I’m going back to Lystra to a more comfortable life.” That wasn’t his approach at all, he continued on in ministry from that point. His captivity and his release and continued into ministry testifies to his sincere faith, that he persevered.

He persevered to the end when at the end of Paul’s life, where in 2 Timothy 4:1-5 he was still looking to Timothy as taking leadership and he charged him with this in 2 Timothy 4:1-5, **“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

And Timothy did fulfill his ministry. There’s a tradition recorded that says that Timothy ended up in Ephesus throughout the rest of his life, ministering there even to the point of death and preaching the word as an elderly person. So we find Timothy being charged by Paul at the end of Paul’s life because he viewed Timothy as being faithful and sincere and true in being able to carry out these responsibilities that he had entrusted him and charged him with.

Timothy’s responsibilities was to preach the word or as 2 Timothy 2:2 puts it, he was charged with passing the truth to faithful men, to preach the word, and to preach the word to faithful people to teach them to teach others also. To pass this truth to people who would be able to pass the truth to others. The truth of God’s Word going from Paul to Timothy to others to pass onto others and this continues even to you today. This is how the church is built up by God’s Word going to people who teach other people and those faithful people in this built up the church and this includes you and hopefully Timothy is an example of this for you to be faithful in your ministry.

Let us pray together.

Lord, we thank You for this Scripture that teaches about Timothy and who he was and his faithfulness to You and his consistence and sincerity of faith. We pray Lord that this would be shown in our life. That we would be able to learn, to labor, and to serve even in leadership capacity to benefit Your work in this fellowship and in preaching the gospel more and more as time goes on. We pray that You would see us as you saw Timothy, being sincere in faith and able to serve You with a whole heart. We pray that You would build that maturity into our lives and that we can be abounding more and more as the years go on into enduring to the end. In Jesus name, we pray, amen.