

# Timothy, I #1 Ch. 1

by Chuck Missler

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*The sermon explores the challenges of ministry through the lens of Paul's letters to Timothy, emphasizing the importance of mentorship and perseverance in faith.*

**Duration:** 57:19

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 1:1

**Topics:** "Timothy"

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## Description

The sermon transcript discusses the power of audio tapes as a tool for personal spiritual growth. The speaker emphasizes that while videos are popular, audio tapes have a unique ability to engage listeners while they are engaged in other activities. The transcript also highlights the transformation of the apostle Paul, who went from being a prosecutor and murderer to a preacher and missionary through God's grace and mercy. The speaker encourages the audience to proclaim the gospel and shares Paul's personal testimony as proof of its effectiveness. Additionally, the transcript mentions the richness and depth of worship songs, contrasting them with modern music that is often criticized for lacking theological depth.

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## Transcript

I'm told the following advertisement appeared in a London newspaper. The ad ran like this. Men wanted for a hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful, honor and recognition in case of success.

And thousands of men responded because it was signed by the Nordic Arctic Explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and of course that made the difference. But that's not a very appealing ad until you know who it's for, right? That made all the difference. It's kind of interesting, if Jesus had advertised for workers, the announcement might have read something like this.

Men and women wanted for the difficult task of building my church. You will often be misunderstood, even by those working with you. You will face constant attack from an invisible enemy.

You may not see the results of your labor, and your full reward will not come until after all your work is completed. It may cost you your home, your ambitions, even your life. Now, on the face of it, not very appealing until you realize who you're working for.

The greatest master that anyone could wish for, and this task that he's calling for is certainly the greatest challenge that anyone could commit their life to. And that's really what we're going to be focusing on, because we're going to be focusing on a couple of Paul's pastoral epistles. There are three epistles of Paul's that were written to pastors.

Many of the epistles obviously were written to churches, dealing with the practical, theological, and many of the different problems facing these growing churches. But three of his epistles were directly sent to his closest workers, namely two to Timothy and one to Titus. And the point before we get into the, you know, often you say, well gee, those are pastoral epistles, they're written to pastors, and indeed they were, except the point that we need to have in focus tonight, as we start this exploring this letter, is that how many of you, let me ask you, how many of you are in the full-time ministry? How many of you are saved? Let me ask the question again, how many of you are in a full-time ministry? Oh, you're a quick learned, good for you.

The percentages increased a little bit there, you betcha. You know, we give sort of a nodding acquaintance to that intellectual consent, but it's important to really realize that. And I remember vividly a board meeting I was at many, many years ago.

I was on the board of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, and serving for a three-year term there. It happened, in those days of course, I was teaching my Monday night Bible studies. I've done that, I did that for a better part of almost three decades down there at Costa Mesa.

My Monday night Bible studies, the tapes from that really started a following which led to our full-time ministry. But the point is, in those days I was a busy executive doing my thing, but I did it as just something I love to do, as my recreation, do the Monday night Bible study. But it happened that some of my tapes fell into the hands of the Manson gal.

Susan Atkins, who of course was arrested with Charlie Manson and that whole thing, was in solitary confinement. And she had heard my tapes and wanted to see me. Now it turns out, if you're trying to visit someone in solitary, it's very, very difficult to arrange, but one of the things that simplifies it is if you're ordained.

And so I was at this board meeting, I happen to mention that to Chuck, and Chuck thought it through and says, you know, to get in there it'd be easier if you're ordained. And I says, yes. Then he told a story to the board.

He says he knows a missionary down in Guatemala, I think it was. His passport says he's a missionary. And he goes down there, and he's a dentist, he takes care of the teeth for all the Wycliffe translators and people in the missionary.

And so he's five days a week, eight to five, I mean, whatever, it's a number of days a week, eight to five, he's a dentist. But because he does a ministry, his passport says missionary. He says he also knows a dentist in Long Beach, that from eight to five he pulls teeth or does whatever they do.

But every night of the week he goes a different place and teaches Bible studies. His passport says he's a dentist. Chuck's point was, the guy in Guatemala's passport says he's a missionary, he's really a dentist.

The other guy's passport says he's a dentist, he's really a missionary. Then he said, man doesn't ordain, God does. All we do is ratify.

And then he looked at the board and says, do you want to ordain Chuck Missler? And they said, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. And so they ordained him. But I remember that so vividly because Chuck used that anecdote, and because in his view, even though I was a full-time executive, chairman of Western Digital or whatever I was doing at that time, as far as he was concerned, I was just using that as a way to pay my overhead so I could teach the Bible.

Because that's what I did as a joy. It wasn't until many, many years later that Hal Lindsay really took advantage in effect of one of the valleys we were going through at the time, a deep one at that, but to suggest I change that around, make my hobby my profession. And that's when we started full-time ministry.

But I mention that because even in those days when I wouldn't have regarded myself as a full-time, you know, missionary or pastor or whatever, if somebody asked me what I did, I was, I gave my business card, I was, you know, I was on several boards of directors, I was a professional executive, I was chairman of this company or that or whatever. And I didn't take my, I took myself very seriously as an executive. I was insufferable.

But didn't take myself seriously to Bible teach, that's what I did for fun. And it's interesting, but in truth, I constantly get confronted with people from 20, 30, 40 years ago, literally, that encountered me in business that tell me that life changed when I witnessed to them while we were having a business lunch. I don't even remember doing that, to be honest with you.

But we had a very interesting experience occur at NRB. A guy came up to me after a panel, introduced himself, reminded me how when I was at Ford, he represented Kodak. And I apparently, apparently witnessed to him on the way to lunch and it changed his life.

I didn't know it at the time, but he's, his wife was there. He shared the whole story. It blew me away.

But mostly because I don't remember those days as being a missionary or an outreach or, you know, a Christian worker. I just, you know, you did it out of, out of just caring. And so I think I wanted to open with that sort of candor because we're going to study a couple of letters that Paul wrote his closest, probably his closest associate, one of his closest associates, young man by the name of Timothy.

And here he's talking not to a stranger, not to a church to be read publicly to a congregation, but rather a letter to a personal friend to counsel him and help. Now, Timothy was a young man. He was not too happy in his church in Ephesus.

And Titus, who also gets a letter similar to this, was in a difficult situation in Crete. Both of them, Paul in effect said, Hey guys, be faithful. It's too soon to quit.

That's your one sentence summary of the letter. Now, a little background on Paul, who's writing the letter. There's no way I can summarize Paul in a brief introduction, but it is perhaps useful to reflect a little bit on his background, which led to this letter.

Paul, among other things, was arrested in Jerusalem about 57 AD, and he was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years. When you visit Israel, most of us think of Jerusalem as the capital. Well, it is.

It's our center of interest. But in the day of Christ, when he was there in the ministry, the Roman capital was at the coast on Caesarea. When you go there, there's incredible ruins they've uncovered and so forth.

That was where Pontius Pilate went to Jerusalem during the holidays, special holidays, but his real headquarters and stuff, and the king and the rest were all down there in Caesarea. Now, he was in prison in Caesarea for two years, and then his voyage to Rome to be tried before Caesar started about September of the year 59 AD, just to give you a rough feeling here. Now, it was after a shipwreck and a three-month wait, three-month wait on Malta, he arrived in Rome about February of the year 60.

He lived in his own rented house and had liberty to minister, even though he was in a house arrest situation. It was at that time that Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon were written during this first Roman captivity. Captivity, but in the sense of a house arrest kind of environment.

He was acquitted of the charges against him and released. And during the two years that followed, he ministered in many places, and he wrote at that time this letter, 1 Timothy, to Timothy, who was at the time pastoring in Ephesus. It was about 65 AD that Paul was arrested again, and this time he was put into a dungeon.

It was then that he wrote 2 Timothy. Now, Paul's in a dungeon waiting to die, and he wrote a letter to encourage Timothy. Think about that.

That was his last letter. Well, Timothy, the guy that receives this letter, he'd been one of Paul's most constant companions. You know, that in itself is almost, takes your breath away.

Because if you know anything about Paul, he was what we'd classify today as a type A, you know. He was going all the time, intense individual. I don't think he had a volume control.

I think it was an on or off switch, you know. But anyway, Timothy was one of his most constant companions. Timothy was son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother.

No mention is made of his father being a Christian, so most scholars presume that he just wasn't a Christian. But that's a presumption, I believe. But his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were very God-fearing gals, and they made, they were both known for their sincere faith, and they apparently raised all their children with a real knowledge of the Scripture, and Timothy, of course, being among them.

Now, Timothy was probably living at Lystra when Paul first visited the city on his first missionary journey. Timothy was there. That's probably where they first met, although it's later that Paul picks him up to have him go with him.

And Timothy had a good reputation, we learned from Acts 16, where some of these allusions arise. And Paul may not have been the one to actually lead him to Christ. Many people assume that because Paul always regards him as a son of the Lord.

He may have, but that isn't necessarily certain. Paul apparently had ordained the young minister. We'll find that in the second letter it's expressed in there.

And Paul clearly has great confidence in Timothy. And Paul wasn't casual in giving his trust or confidence, because he'd been burned a lot. But he trusted this young man.

We do know that Timothy really knew the Old Testament Scriptures, thanks to his mother and his grandmother. So Paul took on Timothy as a promising protege. We also find, as we get into this first letter, that apparently there were also prophetic utterances within the church body that confirmed Timothy's

appointment.

And so Paul became very much like a spiritual father. And indeed, he may have been the one to originally... I personally don't read the text that he was the one that originally led him to the Lord, but clearly he was one of his principal tutors. And I'm very sensitive to this, because I can remember when I was a teenager, I actually developed a love for the Scriptures at a very early age, for reasons that are just the Holy Spirit.

I just picked up a Bible and found it fascinating and got interested in it. But it was my teens that I really grew and made my commitment to Christ and so forth. But far beyond those traditional formal steps, I also encountered, at that time, a marvelous, marvelous teacher.

In those days in Southern California, this is about 90 years ago, well, it seems like it. No, actually, this would have been the late 40s, early 50s, roughly. There was a teacher in Southern California by the name of Theodore B. Hacks.

And he was the president of an organization called the California Lutheran Bible Institute. But he and another pastor used to go around and do sessions at churches in the evening, special teachings. And I remember Reverend Forrest was teaching Genesis and Hacks was teaching Revelation.

I happened to attend one of these services. And Ted Hacks made the point that Revelation is all in code. And every code is explained somewhere else in the Scripture.

That was his sort of approach to the Book of Revelation. And so I was intrigued by that. And so that not only got me excited about really getting into the Scripture more seriously, which it did, but it also turned out in those days, I think I was 14 at the time, I had a driver's license.

Because in those days in California, you could get a license early. And I had one. And being just a student, I had free evenings.

And so I got to know Ted Hacks and I used to drive him to his speaking commitments, which of course was just my way to get tutored. And that went on for a couple of years while I was in high school. And he later took on a church.

And I, of course, attended that church. And he was really my pastor when I graduated high school and went to the Naval Academy and all. And through those years, I could go on.

But the point is, as I think back about my life, my early passion for the Scripture came from being tutored, in effect, by Ted Hacks, Pastor Theodore B. Hacks. He was just a legend in his own way in that community. Very, very knowledgeable.

When he held the Bible in his hand, you could tell he loved it. He just had a passion for the Word of God. And as I think back of the last few decades, I think of Walter Martin.

In fact, probably the three people who I hold higher in regard in our contemporary society are Walter Martin and Hal Lindsay and Chuck Smith. And one of the unique blessings that I've had over the last 30 years is to be personally tutored by each of them. I've sat on their boards.

We've traveled together. We've talked. And the ability to be sort of taken on as a protege, in a sense, is such an essential dynamic in our Christian life.

And I've often felt that I had a unique advantage in teaching the Bible because I had this personal tutorship by Ted Hacks as a teenager, but also by Hal Lindsay on prophecy and Walter Martin on church doctrine and Bible truth, and Chuck Smith in terms of just the practical love relationships that the Scripture stole. And I used to feel I had an unfair advantage until one day I was talking to a group like this, and it hit me that every one of you can have the same advantage I did, because you're going to be personally tutored by those guys or whoever you want. That's through cassette tapes.

One of the most powerful ways to find a Paul in your life is to discover the power of audio tapes. Videos are great, but I don't think they're nearly as powerful. We're a video culture.

Pop it in, see what special reports and whatever. That's fine. But I think the most powerful thing is an audio tape while you're driving, cleaning up the workshop on Saturday, whatever you're doing.

Incredible. I've had more people tell me that they've learned more from audio tapes in six months than they did in 12 years of Christian schools plus seminary. Now, they may be exaggerating, but I don't think so.

Learn more about the Bible, that is. And so this idea of a protege is important. Timothy, getting back to our text here, Timothy, of course, had Paul as his teacher, and Paul became his spiritual father.

Referring to him as my true son in the faith, it was discovered in this first letter, and as my dear son in the second letter and also in Philippians and elsewhere. Timothy's promise for the ministry was recognized early. There are many passages for that.

They'll be in your notes. And so Paul took him on as a major companion and became the apostle, one of his most trustworthy fellow laborers. And he became Paul's personal representative and messenger.

Six of Paul's epistles include Timothy in the Salutations, in the 2nd Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2nd Thessalonians, and Philemon. Now, a strange misunderstood thing. Timothy had Gentile father, Jewish mother, mixed parentage.

And so Paul caused him to get circumcised. And many scholars are troubled by that because this occurs after the Council in Jerusalem in Acts 15. And it would seem to be contrary to the decision that was made in the Jerusalem Council, which was held shortly before the second missionary journey.

Titus, by the way, was not compelled to be circumcised. He apparently wasn't Jewish anyway. The mixed parentage could have been an occasion for serious offense in Jewish circles.

And that's why Paul apparently had him circumcised, because he wanted to maximize Timothy's ministry. He didn't want his uncircumcision to be a stumbling block for potential Jewish believers. Now, we're not hung up on this circumcision thing today, but there is an interesting point here, is that Paul really spared few steps to maximize his appeal to someone that needed the Lord.

And there are credentials, there are styles, there are cultural things that some of us can attain to that may have no other value but to make us acceptable within a certain cultural segment. Those are not without value. But the goal, of course, is to present Christ.

Now, some of you are probably saying, well, that's just the way Colin, Kurt, and Chuck are rationalizing getting back into ham radio, you see. It doesn't have anything to do with that at all. And I'll let that go.

But there is a lesson for all of us to recognize that there are communities that you can probably access that other people can't. And you may have those credentials or accessibility because of God's ordination. So you might think that through.

Anyway, Timothy had become so dear to Paul that the apostle's last message was a touching appeal for Timothy to join him in the final days of imprisonment. We'll see that in the second letter, 2 Timothy. After being released from his first imprisonment, with Timothy by his side, he apparently revisited some of the churches in Asia, including Ephesus.

And on his departure from Ephesus, Paul left Timothy behind to provide leadership to the congregation. And then after an interval, Paul wrote 1 Timothy to him to help him. Because he's having trouble.

He wasn't too excited about it. He's very young. There's also indication that he's a little timid, it would seem.

And his youth may have been an obstacle to that congregation. Timothy may have just been a little retiring, a little easily intimidated by Paul's counsel to him. And Paul is constantly spurring him into action.

I have a feeling that he could have been, you know, throttled to the wall anyway, and Paul would still be spurring him to action. We've all had to run into sales managers like that. But anyway, he was young because Paul has an exhortation in his first letters in the fourth chapter.

He says, let no one despise your youth. And that was after 15 years when Timothy joined him. So, it's all relative, I guess, huh? And so, you'll notice that Paul uses a lot of military idioms with regards to Timothy.

He used to fight the good fight and so forth. Aggressively protecting and propagating the gospel. And uses a full range of gifts and so forth.

But, in spite of his gifts, he was apparently a very gifted young man, but he was also very easily discouraged. And so, one reason we're jumping into this letter is because I think our own times are changing. The kind of world that we've all taken for granted over the last 10, 20, 30 years, whatever, is a world that is evaporating away from us.

The world is changing. And if you're a student of history, you'll discover that there are certain times in history where there is radical change. Things may be stable for a while, but then there's a change.

There's always some people, a small minority, probably, but some people that sense the change coming, recognize it, and deal with it. And yet, there are many that are just clobbered by it. And so, that's the big challenge, to try to maintain a balance and yet be sensitive to change.

And there are changes. And I think it's clearly becoming increasingly politically incorrect to be a Christian, a Bible-believing Christian. I think that we could, I'm not saying we will, but I think we could very well be facing dark times ahead.

I'm not talking about Y2K and that stuff, or even terrorism, those things. I'm really talking about the mood in America. I'm talking about the lack of morality in America.

I'm talking about the invertebrates that populate the Senate and the Congress. And I think Paul's advice to Timothy, although it had a very specific context, and we'll try to keep that in mind as we go, I think it's going to be very easy for us to glean from this letter practical counsel, practical management advice for

the days that we're facing, even though our context is quite different. But I think as we go into this letter, we should recognize the reality that you and I are in a full-time ministry.

We're in a full-time ministry. Okay, now, Ephesus was not the easiest place to minister. The city was known throughout the world for its lascivious worship of Diana.

Paul had done a great work for three years there. Scripture says that all that dwelt in the province of Asia heard the word of Jesus. Did an incredible work.

But at the same time, Ephesus was the fountainhead of myths and the Greek mythology and all the rest of it. When I read that phrase in a commentary, pointing out that Ephesus wasn't the easiest place to minister, I had to add my own notes here. Are there any easy places? I don't think there are any easy places.

And I think that we all have our challenges. So anyway, Paul is writing his letter from Macedonia to Timothy and Ephesus to encourage him and give him some advice. And heterodoxy had infested the church.

And legalism and some speculative theology was based on myths and genealogies and things were dividing the church. And there are two basic issues that affect every believer. The creed and the conduct.

The creed are the interior issues in any church body. And the conduct is the external issues. But both are dealt with in the letter.

Now, Timothy consists of six chapters. The first chapter will talk about faith of the church and doctrine to some extent. The second chapter will deal with the order of the church.

The third, the officers of the church. And the fourth, the apostasy that was coming. And we'll relate to that.

And chapters five and six, the duties of the officers. But again, we'll miss the point if we think of these simply in terms of church organization, that sort of thing. There are deeper issues involved.

The second letter, which we'll touch on when we finish the first briefly, is four chapters. It'll deal with the afflictions of the church, the activity of the church. And the last chapter is the allegiance of the church.

So we'll probably spend about eight sessions going through both letters, first and second Timothy. Now, speaking of church government, there are three basic forms of church government. The Episcopal form, as it's called, not necessarily limited to the denomination by that name, is where one or several in charge at the top, not necessarily at the local church.

That's typically called structurally Episcopal form of government. A Presbyterian, and again, we're not dealing with the denominations here, we're dealing with the alternative organization structures, is where the representatives are elected from the membership, but again, responsive to not necessarily the local body, a more senior body. That always creates issues.

And the third form is a congregational form. That's where the people themselves involve themselves in the decisions. They elect even the members in the church, and most decisions go to the congregation for a vote, that sort of thing.

Now, all of these can work well. All of these also typically have problems. And the real thing you quickly discover if you wade through all of this is that the form of the church government is not the problem, even though these are three very different forms.

The real problem is the caliber and the character of the men holding the office. If you've got the right men, they work. If you've got the wrong men, they don't.

And it's got very little to do with the structure per se. Because Christ is the head of the church in any case. That's either recognized, acknowledged, and operative, or it isn't.

And that'll depend on the caliber and the character of the men involved. And that's the problem today in public life. It shouldn't surprise us that's the same in the church life.

I'm reminded of what the Scripture tells us about public life, and that is we get the leaders we deserve. And I don't know if that applies to the church or not. If the shoe fits, great.

Now, Paul will emphasize that there's two aspects to a spiritual officer. He must be a man of faith, and he must be motivated by love. And I wouldn't take either one of those for granted, even though someone may be standing behind a pulpit.

And you want to put those to the test. Now, he will explain in this first chapter, chapter 1 of Timothy, there are three things, three responsibilities of the local church. One is to teach sound doctrine.

It starts there. That's the foundation. To proclaim the gospel and to defend the faith.

Now, his first 11 verses will be talking about teaching sound doctrine. Let's plunge into 1 Timothy chapter 1. First verse, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope. Now, it's interesting, he uses the term commandment.

In the Ephesian letter, he opens by the will of God. Here he's saying by the commandment of God. That's a narrower term.

The will of God is broader than the commandment of God. We can know the commandments of God. They're detailed.

The will of God is even broader. But here, in other words, this is sort of a way of emphasizing. Both Paul and Timothy were sent by the King of Kings, specifically.

So Paul is a soldier here. The term is a military term. And he's an apostle by commandment, not by ambassadorial commission kind of thing.

He uses the term our Savior. He's going to use that 10 times in the pastoral epistles. He also speaks of Jesus Christ as our hope.

As our hope. Our blessed hope, in fact. He is coming for us.

And this should be the ultimate encouragement in times of stress. You're in stress. You have pressures.

You get hit by something that's pretty tough. Your first step out of the darkness is to recognize and to focus on our hope. The hope of Jesus Christ.

And it's appearing and it's coming for us. Now, verse 2. Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith.

There is that protege relationship emphasized. Grace, mercy, and peace. With grace and peace, he uses other letters.

Here he throws in mercy, which is interesting, makes a trinity out of it. God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, he's going to talk about false teachers here shortly.

False teachers are always busy. And it's important that we take false teachers seriously. And there are some television channels which feature every day just about everything Paul preached against.

One way or another. And you need to understand that doesn't mean we should quibble with our Christian brothers that are spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ on the one hand. On the other hand, it does mean we should be sensitive to false teaching.

Verse 3. I besought thee to abide in Ephesus when I went to Macedonia that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Now, here again, Paul uses military language. That mightest charge some.

See, that's a military term. To give strict orders from a superior officer is what the term typically is defined by. And he's going to use that term eight times in these letters to Timothy.

That they teach no other doctrine. See, too often our churches, by the way, are places for entertainment rather than enlightenment and enrichment from the Word of God. That's one of the things that Paul's going to call for.

Verse 4. Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith so do. Now, remember Ephesus was the heartland of the mystery religions. And the Temple of Hadrian was there.

The Temple of Trajan. And the Great Temple of Diana, of course. All these were centered in Ephesus and all based on the mythology of the Greeks.

The common mythology of that culture. You say to yourself, well, gee, we're not in a culture that is committed to mythology. Wrong.

Wrong. The one thing that any thinking systems engineer knows is that we were designed. Our selves are the most complex, interacting, subtly tuned systems imaginable.

And when the survival of an organism depends on the simultaneous proper operation of each of its subsystems, you've just defined out of existence the possibility of it happening by chance. It takes very skillful, highly coordinated design. And anyone with a design background, anyone with a systems engineering background knows that head on.

And yet, we live in a culture which is committed to the myth that we're all here by accident. By chance. That's easily disprovable by the laws of science.

In today's world, Darwinism is out of date. There are several books that have come out recently. Darwin on Trial, outstanding book.

Darwin's Black Box, another one. Darwinism no longer is regarded as acceptable explanation from the evidence that we know. You don't have to be a creationist or a Bible thumper to embrace that truth.

But despite that, that's still taught in our schools. That is the basis not only of our science, but our psychology, our culture, our politics are all based on a myth. An easily disprovable myth.

And I don't want to spend our time hammering that except to recognize that you and I are victims of myths. In fact, I give you a challenge. I once was going to do a little series of messages on Satan's most believable lies.

And I decided that I was going to start to make a list. Okay, what are the major lies? Well, evolution, put that on there. Start making a list of those.

Of the things, I'll give you another example. That you go to heaven by being good. You know, in our plays, in our entertainments, in our fiction, there's the implicit, if not explicit, presumption that you get to heaven by being good.

Are you good enough? You know, you have all the little jokes about pearly gates. All these things. Even that, commonly accepted.

But people don't believe in heaven, still regard heaven as that place you go to if you're good kind of thing. All, obviously, incorrect. If you start that little exercise on a sheet of paper and make a list of the things you know, that are commonly accepted that you know are not true, you'll come to a startling discovery.

You'll discover that there's probably nothing commonly believed in our culture that is true. And that's the kind of thing, I could bore you all evening with examples, it's not as powerful as you sitting down sometime when you're in sort of a contemplative mood, take a sheet of paper, try to make a list of the things that you know are not true. Myths, commonly held myths.

And you come to a shocking discovery. This is the only thing you know is true. Now you and I'll nod that way, yes that's true because it's politically correct in this gathering, that's the proper response.

But you need to rediscover that, that's very disturbing. Anyway, let's move on here. Paul uses the term fables, and this could be in reference to Philo.

He was an outstanding scholar and a brilliant Israelite, who took the Old Testament and spiritualized it. That was the nature of his writings. And he introduced the myth viewpoint of the Old Testament.

Now this is back in Paul's day. Now this isn't just Philo, I'm using him as an example because that was extant at the time. Many seminaries, Christian seminaries, teach Genesis that way.

That Adam was a representative man. And these interesting little stories all through Genesis are just a mythological common base from which other things were built. There's a tendency, even in seminaries, to regard the Bible as a collection of religious views that were salutary and helpful to a culture or whatever.

And that is a subtle form of denial. And the idea that Adam really lived, that Adam and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were real people, that these stories, Jesus Christ authenticated it. If this isn't accurate, the Torah isn't accurate, Jesus Christ was a liar and a deceiver.

If you can buy into that, you've got bigger problems. Anyway, so that's part of what's going on here. And there's also this, they also dealt a lot with the law and the technicalities, raising questions rather than answering them.

And by doing that, they were creating division, hypocrisy and other problems. Now, that doesn't mean we shouldn't be investigating. It doesn't mean we shouldn't be raising provocative questions to broaden our understanding of the Scripture.

But there's a very, very careful balance of not creating divisions, not majoring on the minors. And that's what Paul is talking about. And one of this genealogically related kind of myths has to do with the confusion today between Israel and the Church.

Most churches today teach that the Church is the modern Israel, that Israel forfeited the promises to her, that they fell upon the Church and that kind of reconstructionism. Those things are tragic because they make God a liar, because He promised Israel all kinds of things that haven't happened yet. They weren't promised to the Church.

Israel and the Church are distinct. They have different origins, they have different missions, and they have totally different destinies. And this is not some kind of modern theological twist.

This is what Paul hammers away in his epistles. His definitive statement of Christian doctrine called the Book of Romans hammers away for three chapters, 9, 10, and 11, that God is not through with Israel yet. They have a destiny that will be fulfilled when the Church is complete and taken out of here.

And he makes that very clear. Now, another form of myth. We keep running into things we call the New Age.

There's nothing new about the New Age. That's the old Gnosticism and repackaged in some pseudo-scientific jargonese. And don't let science fool you.

Science pretends to be pursuit of truth. That's not true. Science is in pursuit of naturalistic explanations for the evidence that deny God.

You put God in the equation and it's not considered scientifically acceptable. They've set up a set of rules which is not a pursuit. They will not follow the evidence if that's where the evidence leads.

The insistence on the body of science is explanations that are materialistic or naturalistic in nature. There are some signs that that's changing. The particle physicists come to our rescue because they've discovered some things that the universe itself may not have any real.

This is all a virtual reality. You start to get into some of that. Those guys are in metaphysics whether they like it or not.

But we'll move on. Verse 5. Now, the end of the commandment is charity. Don't let that term throw you.

That's the old-fashioned translation of agape. If you don't know what agape is, you've got a book you've got to get called *The Way of Agape* because the one that has really gotten into this, spent the better part of 20 years researching the meaning of that word or the equivalent word in Hebrew and Greek and unraveling that in ways that have gotten tremendous endorsements from some of the scholars is my wife's book, *The Way of Agape*. So I encourage you to do your homework there.

Now, the end of the commandment is love, agape. Out of a pure heart. Ooh, I wonder what that is.

And of good conscience and of faith unfeigned. You mean you can feign faith? Yes. Everywhere.

You see it. A pure heart. The pure heart is in contrast to the old nature.

He'll talk more about that. What's love? Love is an act of concern for others, which means you don't gossip about them or in any way bring harm to them. There's many other meanings to it too, but in the tone of the epistle, that's what Paul's going to be driving at.

And he speaks of conscience, a good conscience. Conscience to know with, as in the Greek. 21 times in Paul's letters, 6 times in these epistles.

And it's possible, by the way, to sin against your conscience so that you sear it, so it becomes ineffective. It can be seared like scar tissue. Some consciences are ineffective because the effects of sin has made it scar tissue.

It's no longer operative. Verse 6. From which some, having swerved, have turned aside into vain jangling. What do you mean vain jangling? Well, meaningless talk, empty chatter.

Beautiful words, but with vapid content. One of the places you run into this, by the way, are some of our songs. Now, we're in a modern era of many wonderful worship songs where we really express love to the Father.

And that's wonderful. And they're also in modern musical terms. But I think it was Dave Hunt that first called my attention to the contrast between modern Christian music and the classic old hymns.

And it happened about the time I first heard him make this remark. I also happened to be spending some time in Scotland, speaking at a lot of the churches there. I was actually at Macbeth's Castle and so forth.

Kind of fun. But when you're with those people, on the one hand, they're not as thoroughly taught in the word as some of us have come to expect in a well-taught congregation. On the other hand, they love to sing.

When you're in that crowd, boy, do they sing. And are the songs rich and full of God's truth. I remember Dave Hunt made the contrast.

How few of our hymns or songs in worship today set aside the musical styling, even though some of that's quite elegant, but it can even be updated in terms of our modern taste. But the lyrics are rich and full and declaratory that you almost have to stand back and gasp for the beauty and the power and the depth of the theology that's expressed. The critics sometimes call today's music 7-11 music.

Seven words repeated 11 times. But there's even a more insidious problem. Some of our songs are really bad theology.

How many of you sing Joy to the World around Christmastime? Do you know that's amillennial and bad theology? You can really tear that apart if you want to. I'm not saying you should, but at least be aware of it. I remember being in churches where they'd sing, A mighty fortress is our God, and they'd sing just the first verse.

They don't pay attention to what they're saying because the first verse ends that Satan's on this world and on the earth is not his equal. Period. They're through.

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Let's get to verse 2 which tells the rebuttal to that.

You see? So it's interesting how often we go through routines and we don't pay attention. Anyway, let's move on. Verse 7. Designed to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.

Those that teach error do it with assurance. Those that teach error do it with assurance. Verse 8. But we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully.

How are we to use the law? We need to see if the law is good. Romans chapter 7 verses 12 and 18 deal with that. In the interest of time I'll keep moving.

And we need to recognize our inability to keep the law. The law is there to show us our inability to keep it. The idea that you and I on our own can please God absolutely contradicts the word of God.

You cannot meet a standard. And that's God's wonderful truth that He has a destiny for you that's so fantastic that it's impossible for you to merit it. The law is to demonstrate your lack of that merit so that you're eligible for the free ticket that's available for the asking.

The law was not given to save us. It was given to reveal that God is holy and we are not. Only through the cross.

We are not saved by good works. We're saved unto good works. Our good works has to follow salvation.

But they need to follow salvation as evidence that we are saved. That's what the whole epistle of James hammers that home. And in verse 9, knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man but for the lawless and disobedient and the ungodly and for sinners and for unholy and profane, for murderers and fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.

How many here have the law for them? I do. I'm guilty. I remember we had a big peace conference, an international peace conference in Jerusalem.

I remember Chuck Smith was one of the keynote speakers. And he was a Gentile speaker to a Jewish group there. And he says that, you know, it's been traditional in the church to blame the Jews for murdering Jesus.

It wasn't their fault. It was my fault. It's my sins that put them on the tree.

And when you read this list of Democratic National Committee and others, you've got to include ourselves in that list. The law is to expose, restrain, and convict the lawless. It cannot save lost sinners.

It can only reveal the need for a Savior. But when a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is freed from the curse of the law. Galatians 3. And in the interest of time, I won't track all these down.

They're pretty obvious. They'll be in our notes. Verse 10.

For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind. Whoops. For them that defile themselves with mankind.

That's called homosexuality. God loves the homosexual. He hates homosexuality.

God loves the sinner. God loves the murderer. God loves the thief.

That's why he died for them. We need to remember that. We're not homophobic.

We should hate the sin and love the sinner. We get that backwards. And for liars and perjured persons.

You thought I was making an off-the-wall political comment. No, that's become fashionable today. After being a thing that's contrary to doctrine.

By the way, this thing includes, this little list here, includes five of the Ten Commandments. Honor thy father and thy mother. He's got murderers of fathers, murderers of brothers.

Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. He's got whoremongers or fornicators here.

For them that defile themselves with mankind. That's called sodomy. Thou shalt not steal.

He's got man-stealers here. Kidnappers, in effect. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

He's got liars and perjured persons here. The law is not gospel, but the gospel is not lawless. And Romans 3 is your reference to dig into that.

But we'll keep moving. Verse 11. According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Now, it's the first 11 verses. Verse 12 continues through 17 to proclaim the gospel. See, Paul's personal testimony becomes exhibit A. To prove that it really works.

He's not going to give 30-party recommendations. He's going to... Let me give you an example. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

Okay? But where did he come from? You think you come from a tough background? Look at verse 13. Paul speaking of himself. Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious.

But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. He was a blasphemer because he denied the deity of Jesus Christ and forced others to deny it. He was a persecutor.

He used physical power to try to destroy the church. Now, he said he did it in ignorance. Now, he's referring here to a special Jewish law.

Leviticus 5, 15-19, and Numbers 15, 22-31. But in the interest of trying to get the chapter finished, I'll let you look those up on your own. Special sacrifice.

If you fell into sin ignorantly, you weren't innocent, but there were special sacrifices that you offered that could be substituted. And Jesus acknowledged this basic principle on the cross. He said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

In Luke 23, verse 34. Their ignorance did not save them, nor did Christ's prayer save them. But the combination of their ignorance and Christ's prayer postponed God's judgment, giving them an opportunity to be saved.

Are you with me? We're going pretty fast here. It's heavy stuff. And maybe good scholars might disagree, so you check it out yourself through the scripture.

Verse 14. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. If I get time, I'll come back to that issue I just dealt with, because there's another way to look at it.

But let me make sure we get through this first. Exceeding abundant. Paul uses the Greek prefix here of *huper*, which means super, like super increase in faith, super abounding power in Ephesians 1, super conqueror in Romans 8. It's from this Greek *huper* that we get the word hyper, as a way of extremizing whatever we're talking about.

Verse 15. This is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. See, Paul's point is if God can save him, God can save any or all of us.

None of us in this room can hold a candle to Paul's assessment of himself here. And he considers himself to be least of the apostles in 1 Corinthians 15. Least of all saints in Ephesians 3. But I want you to notice what he says here.

He doesn't say, I was chief. What does he say? I am chief. He still is.

He's still a sinner. Albeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Paul's setting himself up as an example, as a proof.

And he speaks of grace and mercy. That's God's love in action. God turned the prosecutor into a preacher, the murderer into a missionary.

Verse 17, Now the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. Paul, in verse 17, seems to uncontrollably, spontaneously burst out of the doxology.

It's not part of the logic. It's just, oh, there he is. You can almost feel Paul's pulse as he almost involuntarily declares this doxology before going on with his point.

Verse 18, This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare. Here again, he makes reference to prophecies that apparently attended Timothy's original appointment. But again, he says that thou mightest war a good warfare.

We are, you and I are in a warfare. And you need to read Ephesians 6 verses 10 through 18, the armor of God. Paul tells you every day to put on, he tells us twice, put on the whole armor.

Not your best pieces, all of them. There are seven elements there in Ephesians 6, 10 through 18. Seven elements.

You need to understand what they are. You're in desperate need of the armor of God. And you should never fight a battle unless your heart is in it, unless you have a real cause, and unless you intend to get

the victory.

And you do have a real enemy. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, and spiritual, and so forth. And this enemy is resourceful.

He's knowledgeable. And by the way, you are on his turf right now. Paul mentions these two apostates elsewhere.

It has very little good to say about them. And he talks about consigning them to Satan. This is an apostolic prerogative.

We find the same thing Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 5 in another situation. Peter also exercised it in Acts chapter 5, verse 11. Remember Ananias and Sapphira? They lied about the offering, so they dropped dead.

I don't think those gifts are apostolic. I personally don't believe they're operative today. And it's a good thing, because a lot of us wouldn't be here alive.

Now, I just want to take a little bit of time to go back and talk about this idea of ignorance. Jesus makes reference to, One of the challenges I often get, I maintain that everything in the Bible, every word, every detail, is there by design and for a purpose. Furthermore, that purpose always ultimately points to Jesus Christ.

And one of the games that's fun to play is try to find something that doesn't. Try to find something in the Scripture that's trivial, or not important, or irrelevant, or what have you. And I often said I was going to speak at a church, and when we speak at the church tonight, if I'm in a Sunday morning service, trying to get them to come out for a Sunday night, I'll say, Tonight we're going to tear out the page in the Bible that's unnecessary.

That will get all the fundamentalists out. And what you do when you get up there, then you tear out the page between the Old and New Testaments. But one of the things that I'm often challenged, what about the cities of refuge? Back in the Old Testament, we had this quaint idea of the cities of refuge.

The Levites were given, the other, the twelve tribes got land grants. But the Levites, the Lord was their inheritance, so they didn't get land grants, they had cities. Forty-eight cities were assigned to them.

Six of those cities were designated as cities of refuge. And you read through the Torah, you find the rules are that if you kill somebody accidentally, what we would call today manslaughter, the way they enforced capital punishment, the next of kin had the responsibility to kill whoever killed his kinfolk. Well, if you killed somebody, his next of kin was going to come after you.

So if you did it, it wasn't premeditated murder, it's manslaughter, you were to run to a city of refuge. And if you could get to the city of refuge and convince the city elders that it was manslaughter, not premeditated, you got asylum in that city. When the avenger of blood, as he was called, the next of kin came, he could not touch you if you were in a city of refuge.

That was the rule. Now, if you left the city, you were fair game. So you were stuck there, right? And that's the way it stood until, down in Jerusalem, the high priest died.

When the high priest died, you were free to go. All bets are off. You say, well, gee, that's... Many scholars say, well, that's just ancient tribal traditions.

You know, that's just in the Torah. Wait a minute, if it's in the Torah, it's in God's word. It has an issue here.

Now, first of all, let me ask you a question. The cross. Jesus Christ is hanging on the cross.

He died on the cross. How many knew that? Good. Okay.

We want to see if you're awake. Okay. Was that first or second degree murder? Well, from whose point of view? See, from God's point of view.

If it was from God the Father, it was His predetermined counsel. It's premeditated. Clearly.

Okay. But from our point of view, from our point of view, we the Roman soldiers, whatever, that put Him up there. No, it's manslaughter.

Why? Because Jesus said, Father, forgive them for they what? Which means it's manslaughter. That means you and I are entitled to a city of refuge. Follow me? Who is our city of refuge? Right.

And we stay in the city of refuge until what? High priest dies. Who is our high priest? Put it together. You have to connect the dots yourself.

And I'm not being flippant. I really believe that the fingerprints of the gospel are on every page of the Torah. If you're wondering what's in chapter 2, Paul will deal with the place of women in the church.

You see, we'll have something to offend everyone. Trust me. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer.

And let's bow our hearts. Well, Father, we come before Your throne grateful for this evening where You've assembled us. We know that in Your kingdom there are no accidents, no coincidences, that we're all here right now by Your divine appointment and Your divine ordination.

We thank You, Father, that You have gone to such extremes to redeem us in Jesus Christ. And we thank You also, Father, that You in so doing have also called us and commissioned us into a full-time ministry. That our ministry before Your throne is not 8 to 5 or Sunday mornings.

It's full-time. We pray, Father, that You'd help us remember that because we're so presumptuous, so ungrateful, so easily distracted by our petty little priorities. We pray, Father, that You would help us realize that we are called to that ministry, that we are called to war as combatants for You, Father.

And we pray, Father, that You would help us to get equipped for that battle. We thank You, Father, for the example of Paul's advice to Timothy. Pray, Father, that You'd help us appropriate these insights, this counsel, these realities to our own lives, moment by moment and day by day.

Help us to realize that every moment of every day is an opportunity for the kingdom, not for words but for deeds, for attitudes, for a demonstration that You do indeed dwell within us. So, Father, we would just pray that as this week unfolds that You'd strengthen us, encourage us, shield us and protect us. We thank You, Father, that there's no need that we have that You're not aware of.

We do bring to Your throne, Father, our hurts, our needs, emotional, financial, all of them, Father. And we thank You, Father, You're using these needs and these anxieties and these circumstances for a purpose in Your kingdom, if none other than to equip us more effectively for ministry. But, O Father, we would just pray that You'd increase our discernment for what You would have of us and strengthen our resolve that we might be more fruitful servants and more effective examples to a hurting world.

As we commit ourselves this night into Your hands, in the name of Yeshua, our Lord and Savior, our blessed hope, Jesus Christ, Amen.

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