

DAILY READ – 1 TIMOTHY

Devotional notes on 1 Timothy adapted from Matthew Henry's Commentary.

Introduction

Timothy was an itinerant minister whose work was *"to plant churches and to water the churches that were planted."* This letter which Paul wrote to him was to instruct him *"how to fulfil his duty"* and *"to complete the good work he had begun there."*

1 Timothy 1

v1-2: *"Jesus Christ is a Christian's hope."* All our hope is found in Him because *"all our hope of eternal life rests on him."*

v3-4: Local churches need leaders who not only *"preach the true doctrine of the Gospel"* but who also make sure that others in the church do not *"add anything of their own to the Gospel or take anything away from it."* This is *"so that Christians... grow in godliness and maturity to become more like God himself."* As far as it is possible, those who preach and teach should avoid what *"promotes controversies"* or *"gives rise to differences of opinion"* because this *"pulls down the church rather than builds it up."*

v5-7: God's Word commands us to love God and one another. If the teaching we receive in church weakens *"either our love for God or our love for our brothers and sisters"* it is meaningless talk. We need to be taught the truth of God's Word because by believing this, we *"keep a good conscience,"* and our hearts are *"cleansed from sinful love."*

v8-10: *"The law is still very useful as a rule of life... it is good for teaching us what is sin and what is duty."* Though the law cannot make a sinner righteous, it can *"restrain them"* and limit their corruption and sin.

v11: God's glory is seen in His works of creation and providence *"but much more in the Gospel, where it shines in the face of Jesus Christ."* It is a privilege and a trust to declare this good news by which people may be saved from the wrath to come. *"How much grace we need... to be faithful"* in doing this.

v12: *"It is Christ's work to put people into the ministry,"* and those He does, He equips with *"not only ability but also faithfulness."* Both *"those who are called"* and those who benefit from their ministry *"should give thanks to Jesus Christ"* for this.

v13-14: *"What we do ignorantly is less a crime than what we do knowingly, and yet a sin of ignorance is a sin"* and needs to be truly repented of.

v15: The gospel is *"true and dependable words, words that can be relied on,"* and words that *"deserves to be received, to be believed by us all, for our comfort, strength, and encouragement."* It can be summarised as *"Jesus Christ came into the world. The Son of God took on himself our nature. He was made a human being and lived among us."* The reason why Jesus came into the world was *"not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. His mission into the world was to seek and find, and so save, those that were lost."*

v16-17: *"God's gracious dealings with us should fill us with wonder at his glorious attributes. He is eternal, without beginning of days or end of life or change of time... He is immortal, and the origin of immortality,"* for *"only he has immortality, because he cannot die. He is invisible, for he cannot be seen with mortal eyes, living in the light that no one can approach,"* and *"He is the only wise God. Only he is infinitely wise, and he is the fountain of all wisdom."* If *"we have found God to be good, we must not forget to declare that he is also great."*

v18: Ministry is war. It is *"a good fight against sin and Satan."* Those called by Christ to serve as pastors and elders are *"especially engaged in this battle, under the banner of the Lord Jesus... for his cause and against his enemies."* Pray for them that would *"carry out their work conscientiously and courageously despite opposition and discouragements."*

v19: Sadly, there are numerous examples of those who once professed faith in Christ but who have abandoned their profession and shipwrecked their faith. Holding to a good conscience, by listening to it and following its direction is a means of keeping us sound and preserving us in the faith.

v20: Church discipline is designed both *"to prevent further sin"* in the church and to *"restore the sinner."*

1 Timothy 2

v1: *"Disciples of Christ must be a praying people"* who pray for themselves, for everyone in general, and for particular people who need or want our prayers. To help us we have the Scriptures to direct our prayers and the Spirit of prayer poured out on us.

v2: It is good to pray for those in authority. *"They need our prayers, for they face many difficulties and snares that their high positions expose them to."* Pray then, that *"God will turn their hearts, directing them and using them, so that we may lead peaceful and quiet lives"* under their rule and *"do our duty to God and people."*

v3-4: God *"does not desire the death and destruction of anyone, but the... salvation of all. Not that he has decreed the salvation of everyone, for then everyone would be saved."* Those who are saved must come to the knowledge of the truth because this is the only way to be saved. *"If any are not saved, it is not so much for lack of a will in God to save them as it is a lack of a will in people to be saved in God's way."*

v5: We need a Mediator because *"sin had made a quarrel between us and God."* Praise God that we have a Mediator in Jesus Christ who has made peace and brought *"God and humanity together."*

v6: Jesus Christ can be the Mediator because He gave Himself as a ransom for all. *"We deserved to die,"* but He *"died for us,"* in our place, *"to save us from death and hell."*

v7: What a joy it is to tell people the good news that there is a Mediator so we can have peace with God.

v8: *"People must pray everywhere. No place is unsuitable for prayer. No place is more acceptable to God than another."* Men, especially, should take the lead in praying both at home and church, expressing their dependence upon God.

v9-10: The problem Paul was addressing seems to be that the women were coming to church dressed like the local prostitutes in Ephesus. He was concerned that *"those who profess godliness should, in the clothes they wear as well as in other things, act as befits their profession."*

v11-12: Women are prohibited from teaching and having authority over men. Practically, this means that the role of elder and of preaching at the formal gatherings of the church to worship on the Lord's Day is for qualified men only. It does not mean that women are inferior to men, that all women must submit to all men, that men cannot learn from women, or that women should never teach. Timothy, himself, had received the benefit of being taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother.

v13-14: This command Paul gives is rooted in creation. *"Adam was formed first, then Eve; she was created for the man, and not the man for the woman."* Just as the responsibility for keeping the serpent out of the garden belonged to Adam, so the responsibility for keeping the serpent out of the church belongs to the qualified men who serve as elders.

v15: The ongoing effect of the curse is felt by many women in the pains of childbirth, but this *"will be no bar to their acceptance with Christ."* They, like all God's people, will be saved by faith in Christ, and will show the genuineness of this, by continuing to trust in Him and by displaying the fruits of love, holiness, and self-control in their lives.

1 Timothy 3

v1: Christ has given to local churches men to serve as overseers (elders). Those appointed by Him to this role should both desire to serve in this way to bring glory to God and do good to people's souls, and be diligent in carrying out this good work.

v2a: Overseers must be blameless (this does not mean they are sinless). They *"must not be thought of in connection with any scandal"* and *"give as little cause for blame as possible, because this would harm [their] ministry and would bring shame on [their] office."*

v2b-7: Looking down the list of qualifications we have reason *"to cry out, as Paul does, Who is sufficient for these things?"* because *"what godliness, what wisdom, what zeal, what courage, what faithfulness, what watchfulness over... [their] sinful desires, appetites, and passions, and over those who are [their] responsibility"* is required by those who serve as overseers. We can be assured that those who Christ appoints to be overseers, He will be with, and if He is with them, He will equip them for the work, take them through its difficulties with comfort, graciously forgive their imperfections, and reward their faithfulness. *"If God is pleased to make anyone to some extent able and faithful, let God receive the praise and glory for it."*

v8-9: Deacons main work is to *"take care of the temporal concerns of the church, such as the salaries of ministers and providing for the poor."* It is necessary that they have a good character because they are *"entrusted with the church's money"* and it would especially be bad if they are greedy for money because they might be *"tempted to embezzle and convert to their own use what was intended for the public service."*

v10-13: *"People's qualifications should be assessed before they are admitted into church office, or indeed before any trust is committed to them."* Prospective deacons should be tested for *'the soundness of their judgments, their zeal for Christ, and the blamelessness of their way of life.'*

v14-15: The church is the pillar and foundation of the truth. It is to work hard *"to maintain, hold out, and proclaim the truths of Christ."* Each local church is to *"be careful to keep and preserve"* the truth and to *"take care to proclaim it and to transmit it safe and uncorrupted to future generations."* If a *"church stops being the pillar and foundation of the truth, we may and should leave her, for our regard for truth should be greater than our regard for the church."*

v16: What is the truth that churches are to be a pillar and foundation of? It is Christ. *"He is God revealed in the flesh."* He was put to death for our sins and to show that *"his sacrifice was accepted,"* he was raised again by the Spirit for our justification. Angels *"attended his incarnation, his temptation, his anguish, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension."* He has been *"offered to the Gentiles as Redeemer and Saviour"* and *"many of the Gentiles welcomed the Gospel that the Jews rejected."* Finally In His ascension, He was taken up in glory. This happened *"before he was believed on in the world, but it is put last"* because it includes *"his being seated at the right hand of God"* from where he is now *"making intercession"* and *"has all authority both in heaven and on earth."*

1 Timothy 4

v1-2: We are living today in the later times, and one of the marks of this age, is that people will abandon their faith in Christ and worship of God, so we should not be surprised when we see this happen.

v3: *"A sign that people have departed from the faith"* is *"when they command what God has forbidden"* and *"and forbid what God has allowed or commanded, such as marriage and food."*

v4-5: *"Everything is God's because he created everything,"* and *"everything created by God is good."* We are not to refuse the gifts He gives. Instead, we are to receive them, be thankful for them by acknowledging God's power which made them and God's goodness which gave them, and we are to use them for Him.

v6: We need to be regularly reminded of the things of God we have heard before, *"for we tend to forget, and are slow to learn and remember."* This is true for pastors and elders who themselves *"need to grow and increase in the knowledge of Christ and his teaching."* One of the best ways they can do this is by teaching and reminding the members of the church, because as they teach others, they are also teaching themselves.

v7-9: *"We must... train ourselves in godliness. We must not only stop doing evil; we must also learn to do right."* This requires effort, including making sure we don't waste our time with teachings and traditions that neither promote faith or godliness.

v10: Our trust and our hope is in the living God who is the Saviour of all people, and this *"should encourage us in all our services and sufferings for him."* God is the Saviour of all, in that He *"has a general goodwill for the eternal salvation of everyone insofar as he is not willing that anyone should perish... and he does not desire the death of sinners,"* but He *"is especially the Saviour of true believers."*

v11-12: *"Those who teach with words must also make sure that their teaching is supported by their life, for otherwise they pull down with one hand what they are building up with the other."*

v13: Pastors are to *"read and explain, read and urge what he reads."* In both his preaching and teaching *"he must teach the people both what to do and what to believe."* They can only do this if they have been taught themselves, which is why giving attention to the public reading, exhortation, and teaching will require them to *"be concerned with their studies so that they may improve in knowledge."*

v14-15: Those whom Christ has appointed to be pastors and teachers have been given by Him the gifts required to do this work and are themselves a gift from Christ to His church. It is important they do not neglect the gifts they have been given and instead seek to grow in them.

v16: Pastors should be concerned that, in the first place, they have been saved by Jesus. Then in their preaching, they *"should aim at the salvation of those who hear them."* Keeping watch over themselves, their own life and doctrine closely is essential.

1 Timothy 5

v1: When speaking God's Word to different members of the church, leaders are to consider their age to determine the most suitable way of doing this. Older men are to be treated as fathers, with respect shown to them, *"for this would be the likeliest way to have an effect on them, to win them over."* Younger men are to be treated as brothers, *"with love and tenderness"* not with *"a desire to harshly point out their faults or start a quarrel."*

v2: Leaders are to consider older women as mothers when they rebuke and encourage them with the Scriptures. Younger women they are to treat as sisters, which means treating them with all purity. With the temptations that continue to come from the world and the flesh with its sinful nature. this warning continues to be needed.

v3: In the time of the early church, widows were often poor and vulnerable. If they were members of a local church, that local church, as far as they are able to, are to care and provide for them. Their example remains a good example for us to follow.

v4-8: Churches, when giving gifts to those in need, are to take care to make sure *"that those who most need and deserve it"* are supported. Widows who have relatives who are able to support them are not to be supported by the church. *"It is the indispensable duty of children, if their parents are in need and they are able to relieve them, to do everything in their power to that end."*

v9-15: *"The reputation of... churches is greatly affected by the character and behaviour of those who... receive gifts from the church."* For this reason, the character of widows is to be taken into account before providing support. Caution is to be taken about supporting those in need who are idle, because *"it is rare that those who are idle are only idle."* With the extra time on their hands, they are often gossips and busybodies who cause trouble and sow seeds of discord among their brothers and sisters in the church.

v16: It is important that those who are able to help their poor relative do so, rather than burdening the church with that need. This is *"so that the church may relieve those who are widows indeed"* with *"no children or grandchildren able to help them."*

v17-18: Elders are responsible for both directing the affairs of the church and for preaching and teaching, *"though some might be more concerned with preaching and teaching than others."* Double honour, *"respect and maintenance,"* is due to those who labour at this work. *"Let the elders whose work is preaching and teaching be well provided for."*

v19-20: *"Care should be taken"* when an allegation is made against an elder, and it is not to be entertained unless *"the thing alleged against him is well proved."* If proved, their sin must be rebuked publicly for the good of others, to warn *"those who are in danger of sinning by following [their] example,"* as well as for the good of the elder rebuked.

v21: *"Ministers must give an account to God and the Lord Jesus Christ as to... how they have attended to all the things entrusted to them."* Knowing this, should cause them to take care not to show favouritism in their ministry, *"to prefer one person to another for any worldly reason."*

v22: Before appointing a man to the role of elder or pastor, it is important to *"take time to test a person's sincerity in repentance"* and to assess their *"gifts and graces, their abilities and qualifications for it."*

v23: *"It is the will of God that people take... care of their bodies"* so that they are *"most helpful to us in the service of God."*

v24-25: "Some people's sins are so plain and obvious that there is no dispute about bringing them under the discipline of the church... so that they may be led to correction." Other sins take time to appear. "The same is true of the evidence of repentance."

1 Timothy 6

v1: Christians are to behave well when they are at work. If they are disrespectful to those in authority over them, they will "reflect badly on the message of Christ, making it seem as if the Gospel made people lead worse lives than they led before they received it."

v2: "Ministers must preach not only the general duties of all but also the duties of particular relationships." Specific directions and application in their teaching is to be given to the church regarding all areas of life including how members are to behave in their workplaces.

v3-5: "When people are not content with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ" and the teaching that makes people godly, "but are determined to make up their own ideas and impose them on others... they sow the seeds of all trouble in the church," because "when people leave the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will never agree on other words, either their own or other people's, but will constantly wrangle and quarrel about them." Watch out for those make Christ's teaching "the subject of conflict, dispute, and controversy."

v6-8: Godliness means being "content with what God has assigned" for us, knowing that this is best for us in the circumstance we find ourselves in. "If God gives us the necessary supports of life, we should be content with them, even if we do not have its fancy trimmings or delights."

v9-10: "Those who set their hearts on the wealth of this world and are determined to get it... who put their happiness in worldly wealth, who seek it excessively" are in danger of falling into spiritual ruin and destruction. "Greedy people will abandon the faith if that is the way to obtain money."

v11: The way we protect ourselves "against the love of the world" is by following what is good.

v12: The Christian life is a battle, "a good fight," against our corruption, temptations, and opposition from the powers of darkness.

v13-14: God "sees what we are and what we do." Those set apart to serve as a pastor are to "fulfil the work of his ministry" and "conduct himself in his ministry in such a way that he will not lay himself open to any blame." They are to do so in view of Christ's second coming, when they, along with all who follow Christ must "give an account of the talents we have been entrusted with."

v15-16: "Let us... love, adore and praise the great God." He alone is "the only Ruler who is absolute, sovereign... infinitely happy... King of kings and Lord of lords." Sin is a great evil, "since it is committed against such a God." What wonder it is that God would take notice of us and seek us and be pleased to bring us to heaven.

v17-19: Those who are rich need to be aware of the specific temptations that come to them because of their prosperity. They need to beware "of pride," thinking "more highly of themselves," becoming "puffed up by their wealth," and putting their confidence in it. Instead, they are "to trust in God, the living God... to make him their hope... to do good with what they have." Church leaders must not be afraid of speaking and commanding them, "no matter how rich they are."

v20: Leaders of local church will not guard the gospel and all the truths of God found in His Word which has been entrusted to them if they are distracted by worthless and godless talk. They need to hear the exhortation to avoid irreverent and empty speech.

v21: Grace be with you all *"is a short but comprehensive prayer for our friends."* It is prayer that God would not *"withhold any good thing"* from His people.