

Highlights & notes for Introduction to Paul's Pastoral Epistles

(Resource notations explained at end of weekly notes.)

1. **General information about the Pastoral Epistles**

a. To whom and reason for Paul writing these letters:

1) *Pastoral counsel to Timothy and to Titus*, who were coworkers, "sons of the faith" to their spiritual father Paul, and who were loved and especially close to Paul. Paul had chosen Timothy and Titus, coworkers that he had trained, to carry on the Lord's mission.

* "[Paul] is led by the Holy Spirit to give divine counsel to those who will succeed him in order that the Gospel and its ministry will continue just as he received them from the Lord." (SG, p.9)

2) These letters are often called "Pastoral Epistles" not necessarily because of who Paul addresses, but because these letters address issues concerning the Office of the Holy Ministry (the pastoral office). (SG, p.9)

* Timothy and Titus were not apostles, and they were probably not what we would consider to be a pastor (an overseer) of a specific congregation. Rather, we'll see in this study that Paul gives them instructions about pastors, about shepherds of congregational flocks. It may be best to regard Timothy (and Titus) as apostolic representatives, delegated by Paul to carry out special work (as Paul had done, Acts 14:23) in establishing & organizing churches within the regional Church, and selecting, teaching, and guiding elders (Titus 1:5) in their appointed pastoral role within a church. (CSB, Introduction to 1 Timothy)

3) These letters are also written *by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to all generations yet to come*, to pastors and to all church members, with *instruction and encouragement "to maintain faithfulness to the Lord and to keep the faith."* (TPB, p.1; SG, p.9)

b. General content of the Pastoral Epistles:

1) These epistles contain *pastoral advice* to Timothy and to Titus on how to deal with problems in churches both in Ephesus and in Crete. Paul gives advice as to qualifications for pastors and lay leaders, with instructions on worship, and instructions on "how they are to serve the members of their flocks, the young and the elderly, the

widows and the older men, the wealthy and the servants." Paul also warns of the significant problematic issue of false teachers and false doctrine! He "encourages faithfulness in teaching and godliness in conduct." (TBP, p.1)

2) Note: The word *pastor* is derived from the Latin word for *shepherd*. Timothy and Titus were more than pastors, as we understand that role. They had the responsibility of overseeing (shepherding) *the development of an entire church body in a specific region*, which would have included several smaller house churches. (Recall our study in Acts 20:17-38, Paul's meeting in Miletus with the elders from Ephesus. The church of Ephesus was actually *made up of a number of local churches or congregations* [house churches, since church buildings were not constructed until the third century].) Paul provided instruction and encouragement to both Timothy and Titus in their work of building up the church body in such a way so that the local churches in Ephesus and in Crete could stand on their own. (SG; and our Acts study notes)

c. Primary reason for Paul writing these letters, which guided the content of these letters (again under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God's word given): Paul's deep concern for the future of the Church is evident in these epistles.

- 1) Paul provides instruction & encouragement for the ministry of the Church.
- 2) He warns of false doctrine.
- 3) He encourages faithfulness unto Christ.

2. An overview of the First Epistle to Timothy

a. The historical setting (TPB, pp.6-7; SG, p.10, pp.68-69; CSB Introduction to 1 Timothy):

1) Timothy's hometown of Lystra, where Paul preached the Gospel, on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6b-8)

2) Son of a Jewish mother and Greek father, and in early childhood was taught the Old Testament Scriptures by his Jewish mother and grandmother. Timothy had not been circumcised as an infant child.

3) Timothy and his mother evidently became Christian during Paul's first missionary journey when he came to Lystra and preached the Gospel.

4) When Paul returned to Lystra on his second missionary journey, Timothy was recommended to Paul as a helper to assist Paul in his missionary work. Timothy was a young man with a sincere faith, chosen by Paul to be one of his traveling companions and co-workers.

5) Paul circumcised Timothy, not as a requirement for salvation, but in Christian liberty, for the sake of the Gospel, in order that Timothy would be more readily received by the Jews. (Recall our study of Acts 15, the Council at Jerusalem.)

6) Though he was young and inclined to be timid, Timothy set an example to others in speech, life, love, faith, and purity. (1 Timothy 4:12).

7) Timothy had special gifts from the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 1:6), which when combined with his dedicated faithfulness unto the Lord and the Lord's work (1 Cor. 4:17), made Timothy a valuable help during Paul's missionary journeys in the spread of the Gospel.

8) Timothy accompanied Paul during much of the second and third missionary journeys. While our study of Acts mentioned many of the places Timothy went with Paul, of great significance for this study is the work done in Ephesus for over 2 years during Paul's third missionary journey.

9) Timothy was with Paul at the end of the third missionary journey, on the return to Jerusalem, along with the other representatives from the various churches bringing the collection to help out the Christians who were in need due to the famine there. Timothy was most likely there a few days later when Paul was arrested in Jerusalem.

10) When Paul was finally sent to Rome and during those two years under house arrest, Timothy went there to spend time with Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome (Philemon 1).

11) From Rome Paul would send out Timothy and other of his representatives on various important missions (and pastoral calls) to encourage congregations he had established previously.

12) Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to continue the work they had started there, and to encourage and instruct the churches there. After 2 years under house arrest, Paul was released (A.D. 63) from Rome, and Paul traveled to revisit churches to teach and encourage them, and possibly to start new ones (always the missionary wherever he was and wherever he went!).

13) After his release, Paul joined Timothy in Ephesus, where Paul had concerns of the trouble that false teachers were causing in congregations (Acts 20:28-29). After a time with Timothy in Ephesus, Paul left for Macedonia and kept Timothy in charge of the work in Ephesus.

14) In order to help encourage Timothy, Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy from Macedonia about A.D. 64 or 65.

15) Paul's closeness to and admiration of Timothy are seen in Paul's naming him as the co-sender of six of his letters (2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians and Philemon).

b. Who was Timothy, his life and character? (exercise #1 from SG, p.10-11):

- 1) Acts 16:1-3 -
- 2) Acts 17:14-15 -
- 3) Acts 18:5 -
- 4) Acts 19:22 -
- 5) 2 Timothy 1:5 -
- 6) 2 Timothy 3:15 -
- 7) Philippians 2:19-23 -
- 8) 1 Thessalonians 1:1 -
- 9) 2 Thessalonians 1 -
- 10) 1 Corinthians 16:10 -
- 11) 2 Corinthians 1:1 -
- 12) Romans 16:21 -
- 13) Colossians 1:1 -

c. How Paul addresses Timothy (SG, p.11 #2):

- 1) 1 Timothy 1:1-3 -
- 2) 2 Timothy 1:1-5 -

3. An overview of the Second Epistle to Timothy

a. The historical setting (TPB, pp.107-108; SG, p.11; CSB Introduction to 2 Timothy):

1) Near the end of his life, when Paul was facing execution during his second imprisonment (a harsh imprisonment this time under Nero who had changed his position concerning the Christians, and was now persecuting the Christians severely), Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, requested Timothy come visit him in prison as soon as possible.

2) "Nothing certain can be said about Timothy's later life. According to Hebrews 13:23, he may have suffered imprisonment from which he was released. Tradition has Timothy continuing as the first bishop of Ephesus until martyrdom under Nerva in A.D. 97." (TPB, p.7)

3) The sequence in our Bibles has 2 Timothy as the second of the pastoral letters. Chronologically, however, it is the third. In fact, this is the last of all the letters written by the apostle Paul.

4) The reasons for writing this epistle (CSB, TLSB, TPB):

* Personal needs, and he was lonely

* Concern for Timothy and the church.

* His "farewell letter," leaving "his dearest friend and the Lord's church these words of encouragement in written form." (TPB, p.108)

b. Note how the tone of this letter** differs from the letters Paul wrote during his first imprisonment*, when he was certain he would be acquitted and set free (exercise #3 from SG, pp.11 & 69):

*1) Philippians 2:24 -

*2) Philippians 1:25 -

*3) Philemon 22 -

**4) 2 Timothy 4:6 -

**5) 2 Timothy 4:16 -

(Note: In either case, it is *by God's grace alone* that Paul and all Christians are well-prepared for the Lord calling us Home to be with Him, the moment we depart this world in death and go from life to Life to be with our Savior eternally.)

c. What Paul longs for, as he expresses to Timothy in this letter (SG, pp.11 & 69 #4):

1) 2 Timothy 1:4 -

2) 2 Timothy 4:9 -

3) 2 Timothy 4:21 -

4. **An overview of the Epistle to Titus**

a. The historical setting (SG, pp.12,69-70; TPB, pp.174-175; CSB Introduction to Titus):

1) This epistle isn't chronologically the third of the pastoral epistles. Paul wrote Titus about the same time as Paul's first letter to Timothy, written from Macedonia, possibly Philippi, in the fall of A.D. 63.

2) Titus is another faithful coworker with Paul. But we don't know much about Titus. Luke did not mention him in the Book of Acts.

3) Titus is first mentioned in Galatians 2:3, where Paul speaks of him as a Gentile Christian. Recall from our study of Galatians that Paul refused to circumcise Titus when the Judaizers demanded it was necessary for being a true Christian. Paul refused in this situation for the sake of the Gospel.

4) Titus accompanied Paul to the Council at Jerusalem, Acts 15.

5) Paul mentions Titus often in the second epistle to the Corinthians. Titus worked with Paul at Ephesus during the third missionary journey, and from there Paul sent him to Corinth to help that church with its work.

6) When Paul stopped on the island of Crete after his first imprisonment in Rome, he and Titus worked briefly in Crete, and Paul had Titus stay there as his representative and to complete needed work there. Titus was a very capable and resourceful leader, probably younger than Paul, but older than Timothy. He was trusted and a respected troubleshooter, which Crete needed.

7) Later, upon Paul's request, Titus met Paul at Nicopolis (in Greece), and then went on a mission journey to Dalmatia (modern Yugoslavia). Last mentioned in the NT in 2 Timothy 4:10.

b. What we learn about Titus in 2 Corinthians (exercise from SG, p.12 #5):

1) 2 Cor. 2:13 -

2) 2 Cor. 7:6 -

3) 2 Cor. 7:7 -

4) 2 Cor. 7:13-15 -

5) 2 Cor. 8:16-18 -

6) 2 Cor. 8:23 -

7) 2 Cor.12:18 -

* "It is clear that Titus was a vital part of Paul's ministry in Greece and Asia Minor. He is a trusted brother and esteemed minister of the Gospel. He shared Paul's own pastoral work and spirit in ministering to the difficult church in Corinth. Titus was charged with receiving a collection from the Corinthians and showed pastoral sensitivity in dealing with them in the face of a disciplinary matter." (SG, p.69 #5)

c. How Paul addresses Titus in Titus 1:4 - :

"To Titus, my true child* in our common faith:
Grace and peace from God our Father
and Christ Jesus our Savior." (EHV)
*["my true son" NIV]

1) Paul may have led Titus, a Gentile, to faith in Christ, in effect becoming his spiritual father. (TLSB 1:4)

2) "As with Timothy, Paul is reminding all who would question Titus's authority or legitimacy that Paul himself has appointed this man and he enjoys the apostle's full approval. The words 'in a common faith' affirm that Titus's doctrine is that which is revealed in the Gospel and therefore known and believed by all true Christians and not like that of false teachers, which is private doctrine that only specially anointed teachers may know." (SG, p.70 #6a)

d. The special task Paul gave Titus to do in Crete, Titus 1:5 -

"The reason I left you in Crete was so that you would set in order the things that were left unfinished and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you." (EHV)

* This appears to be "putting into order" the "unfinished" work of organizing and establishing these churches, with significance placed upon the appointing of elders/pastors for churches in *every* town. Most important is that these churches are provided with qualified pastors. The significance and priority of the pastoral ministry for our churches is evident. (TPB, pp.181-182; TLSB 1:5; SG, p.70 #6b)

e. Paul's description of the Cretans in Titus 1:12 -

"One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said,
'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'" (ESV)

1) This is a description of the Old Adam in all of us, and as manifested in the world's various cultures. These sins interfere with hearing and believing the Gospel. Note the sins prevalent in our own culture or community that lead us to not always hear God's Word in its truth and purity. (SG, p.70, #7)

2) I think this explanation from TLSB is more fitting, *considering the context*:
"Paul likely cites the passage as a rebuke to the Cretan false teachers and not to

Cretans generally. He challenges the Cretan churches to reject the false teachers among them, who apparently claimed prophetic authority. This teaching strategy suggests that Paul wanted Titus to share the Letter publicly with the churches on Crete." (TLSB 1:12)

5. Note how the Lord's instructions through Paul in these Pastoral Epistles to pastors are also important for all of us believers (SG, p.13, p.70, #8):...

a. ...Helping us recognize and understand the ministry of the Gospel within the Church, teaching us what we can expect from Christ's Church and from pastors that He gives us.

* This is needful because "Christians often have unbiblical expectations that prevent them from appreciating and receiving the true gifts of Christ."

b. ...Helping us to better assist, care, and pray for our pastors.

c. The spiritual truths Paul wrote in these letters apply to all of us in Christ. We are each a member of His Church, and as such these truths touch upon "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:12)

1) These letters, with instructions regarding pastors, are also letters to church members. The instructions the Lord gives are to pastors and to church members. And the encouragement these letters provide are for the entire church., Every member can hear and learn, and grow together as the body of Christ, the Church of His own making. (TPB, p.1)

2) "Laypeople may be tempted to think that these letters do not concern them. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Understanding just what *the will of our Lord is* regarding the work of ministers, will help [laypeople/church members] to not only be humble and grateful recipients of their pastors' service, but genuinely useful assistants and friends to them." (SG, p.9)

Regarding resource notations used throughout this study:

I like to call these highlights and notes "Nuggets" from trusted resources that we've used to help understand the passages we're studying.

1. The notes with quotation marks are direct quotes from the resource indicated.
2. The notes without quotation marks, but with resource notation, are a paraphrase or a collection of highlights from the resource(s) indicated.
3. Finally, some of these notes relate to previous studies we have done, and so these are thoughts about the Scripture passage from previous learning (from our study of other Scriptures which help us understand this particular Scripture... "Scripture interpreting Scripture" in action 😊). For those notes there are no resources indicated, but which are most likely to be found in the references listed below
4. Below are the primary resources that I use throughout our studies. Occasionally there will be other resources, which I will spell out in the notation (such as Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, Augsburg Confession, Formula of Concord, "What Luther Says").

References:

TPB = "The People's Bible (Commentary): 1.2 Timothy, Titus" 2nd edition, by Armin W. Schuetze. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. 2000 (2nd ed.). (Originally published 1988)

TLSB = The Lutheran Study Bible, English Standard Version, General editor Rev. Edward A. Engelbrecht. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. Published 2009.

CSB = Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version, General editor Robert G. Hoerber. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO. 1986.

SG = Study Guide used in our Women's Bible Study (by participants in-person and via Zoom): "1 and 2 Timothy, Titus: Keeping the Faith" by A.C. Mueller. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2006. (This is part of the Bible study series "God's Word for Today")

Most commonly used Bible translations used:

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version

