

Women's Bible Study, **October 4, 2024**
Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church

Highlights & notes for 1 Timothy 1 --The Firm Foundation of Our Faith

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

From Christian Worship Hymnal (2021), #800

1. Introduction/Objectives of this week's study (SG, pp.4 & 71; CSB, Intro to 1 Timothy)

a. By the Holy Spirit's work through God's Word we come to faith and we remain & grow in this gift of faith. It is through His Word that we come to understand the importance of sound Christian doctrine, the importance of being taught God's Word in its truth and purity.

b. It is important that we can recognize false doctrine and how false teachings can so subtly lead us away from the truth of the Gospel, and how very destructive this can be to our faith and in our churches.

c. May we come to appreciate the ministry of God's Word through pastors who are trained and called by Christ to serve as shepherds, guiding and teaching us through God's Word, and helping us and encouraging us in this one true faith.

* "The pastoral office is shaped, directed, and determined not by people but by Jesus Christ in accordance with the Gospel." (SG, p.6)

d. We'll see here in 1 Timothy that the biggest problem facing this young pastor (and the other pastors he was overseeing) in Ephesus was that of the false teachers, those who were introducing false doctrines into this young church of believers and confusing them. False teachers were trying to rob them of their faith.

2. 1 Timothy 1:1-7, False teachers and their doctrines contrary to true faith in Christ alone

a. vv. 1-2, Opening greeting emphasizing...

1) ...Paul's apostleship - An "apostle" is "one who is sent."

* "The one sent goes with the *full authority* of the sender. Paul's words are God's words... his authority as one appointed directly by the risen Lord, whom he had seen. ...Paul and the Twelve were called and sent directly by Jesus." (TLSB, p. 1901)

* As an apostle of Christ Jesus, Paul "wrote this epistle with the authority of Jesus, the Anointed One of God, like the other 12 whom Jesus had chosen and sent out (the meaning of *apostle*) with His Gospel." (TPB, p.10)

* "The apostle's mission was *to give unbelievers the light of the Gospel*, to tell them *the good news about Jesus*." (TPB-Acts, p. 268)

2) ..."Christ Jesus our hope" (v.1) - "Hope objectively embodied in Jesus is not mere wishful thinking but confident [and certain] expectation." (TLSB, footnote 1:1)

3) ..."Timothy, my true child in the faith" (v.2) - Paul had fathered Timothy in the faith and they shared a close and loving relationship. (TPB, p.11)

4) ..."Grace, mercy and peace from God..." (v.2) - Both a prayer & blessing upon Timothy, and the foundation of this faith in "Christ Jesus our Lord."

b. vv. 3-7, Warning concerning the false teachers...

1) Satan uses false teachers to try to lead Christian believers away from the Truth of God's saving grace, mercy and peace. Recall our study of **Acts 20:28-31**, Paul warned the Ephesian elders of the "savage wolves" coming in among their flocks. (TPB-Acts, pp.222-223)

2) These false "teachers" professed knowledge of Scripture, but they really did not know the Truth of God's Word and thus used Scripture in the wrong way. They would read things into Scripture, twist Scripture, invent stories of "genealogies," and they would use the Law without understanding its purpose. (SG, p. 14)

3) They were characterized by conceit, being argumentative, talk that was meaningless and foolish, teaching "ascetic practices" (severe self-discipline and self-abstaining practices), and they used their positions of religious leadership for personal financial gain. (CSB, 1:3-11)

4) These false teachers possibly were forerunners of the Gnostics (CSB 1:3-11). "This heresy reached its full development in the second century. Gnostics claimed to have a higher knowledge... that was necessary for salvation. They perverted law and gospel and failed to acknowledge God's revelation as the only source of truth." (TPB, p.14)

5) False teachers do not promote "God's work--which is by faith" (v.4). "They contribute nothing to knowing the true God and the salvation He prepared for sinners." (This is a significant "red flag" of false teachers!) And they claim theirs is "a higher form of Christianity" which they take upon themselves to zealously "teach" others. (TPB, pp.14-15)

6) While false teachers often preach Law, they fail to understand that the Law demands love, which *only comes from Christ, ...from a sincere faith in Him* (v.5). False teaching promotes controversy, but the teaching of "sound doctrine" (which Paul speaks of later) "generates love, love to God and love toward one's neighbor.... *Only the Gospel with its message of full and free forgiveness* cleanses hearts, calms consciences, and leads to a faith that is without hypocrisy." (SG, p.15; TPB, p.16)

c. **Considering "God's Word for Today"** (SG, p.15, #9 & #10):

1) (SG, #9) -- "What are some of the things that people hear from pulpits where God's Word is not taught in all its truth and purity?"

* Consider those who add/subtract to Scripture, those claiming new or added revelation: 1) Familiar and historic religious cults/sects; 2) Authors, preachers, teachers who claim personal revelation from God (apart from Scripture), or modern "prophecies" (twisting Scriptures to point to current events or personal agendas, rather than pointing to Christ); 3) Recent and often subtly added "trends" of faith.

* Often teachings in churches today "one can find teaching on life skills, personal finances, or so-called personality inventories and personality types. Others... harp constantly on the Law and teach works righteousness and morality as the essence of Christianity." (SG, p.72, #9)

2) (SG, #10) -- "How do some preachers reveal that they do not understand the Law of God?"

* Those who boast of the Law, "but they show no understanding of the right use of the Law. They *prescribe the Law as a means of righteousness and gaining favor with God...* Such methods do not promote growth in the knowledge of God's Word but *lead people away from the Gospel*. Paul warns all Christians not to listen to such teachers." (SG, p.72, #10) [Note that often "Christian outrage," especially on media and on social media, falls into this category of "false teaching," *when wielding Law wrongly and turning people away from the truth of the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus alone.*]

3. **1 Timothy 1:8-15, The true & only Source and Foundation of Faith**

a. **vv. 8-11, The purpose of the Law and the proper use of the Law:**

1) The Ephesian false teachers were not using the Law properly. They were teaching that the Law could make people righteous before God. "The Law is also the Word of God, and therefore it is good, but it is not able to make a sinner righteous, that is, convert, regenerate, and sanctify him or her." (SG, p. 72 #11)

2) (SG, #11) -- The Law is used properly when it serves the sinner in three ways (as most of us learned in our Catechism, "God's Law"). (SG, pp.15 & 72, #11; TPB, pp.18,21; Luther's Small Catechism, "God's Law"):

* A curb -- Serving outwardly, in the lives of all people (for "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23). "Law with its commands and threats is needed to coerce them into at least a tolerable degree of social order and civic obedience, serving as a restraining curb. When wickedness becomes unbearable, laws are passed to curb it.

"Thus also is God's law. It was not made for "the righteous." If there had been no fall, there would have been no need for the law on Mount Sinai. 'It was added because of transgressions' (Galatians 3:19). The purpose of the law is not to replace or add to the gracious Gospel promise. As a curb against wickedness, it does not lead to salvation." (TPB, p.18; Luther's Small Catechism, pp. 34-36)

* A mirror -- "God's Law also works inwardly, in the hearts of all people, as a mirror by showing us our sin" (Luther's Small Catechism, p.34). This is a more important purpose. Romans 3:20, "Through the Law we become conscious of sin."

"The Law was made for the wicked to expose their wickedness. By looking into the mirror of the law we get a reflection of the evil thoughts and sinful actions that have corrupted our hearts and lives. It reveals our true nature." (TPB, p. 18) It shows our need for a Savior to cleanse us of our wretched sin.

* A guide -- "Finally, it has a function that serves only believers in Jesus--it serves as a guide for Christian living." (Luther's Small Catechism, p.34)

"Can the church then forget about preaching the law? It cannot. Paul says that the law was made 'for lawbreakers and rebels...' (1 Timothy 1:9,10). ...Who are the lawbreakers?... 'All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one' (Psalm 14:3)... Christians still have an old Adam. They need to confess that they 'daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment' [from Martin Luther's explanation of the Fifth Petition/Lord's Prayer, Luther's Small Catechism].

3) Regarding v. 9, law...for the lawless: "...this is not to be understood in a simplistic way, as though the justified are not to live without Law. God's Law has been written in their hearts (Romans 2:15 [conscience])... What St. Paul means is that *the curse of the Law cannot burden those who have been reconciled to God through Christ*. Nor must the Law confuse the regenerate with its coercion, for *they have pleasure in God's Law in the inner man (Romans 7:22 [Jeremiah 31:33])*" (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VI 5, as quoted in TLSB 1:9; also quoted in TPB, p. 21)

4) Regarding v. 11, Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:15-25). The *glorious Gospel of the blessed God* (v.11)... "The Good News is that we are saved eternally from the Law's condemnation through faith in Jesus. It is the only means by which sinners can be cleansed and saved. God is described as "blessed" in the NT only here and in 6:15. He is the source of all blessedness, which He gives to believers through the "sound doctrine" of the Gospel." (TLSB, 1:11)

b. vv. 12-15, The riches of God's mercy to save sinners, the worst of sinners

1) (SG #12) -- Here we see how *Paul's life proves that the Law cannot make a person righteous*. Before the Lord had appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and before his conversion, Paul "had grievously offended God, *even though he had tried earnestly to live according to the Law*. Then when the Lord had revealed His mercy and grace to Paul and assured him of the forgiveness of his sins, the apostle became a different man. The Gospel worked faith in his heart and united him with his Savior." (SG, p.15)

* Read Philippians 3:4-6; All his life of keeping (using) the Law (in a terribly wrong way), never made Paul righteous. His zealousness for the Law, proved him to be the worst of sinners in his persecution of Christ and the early Church.

* Read Philippians 3:7-9; Paul realized the confidence in his heritage and self-righteous works actually interfered with knowing God. "If anyone wants to drag good works into the article of justification, rest his righteousness or trust for salvation on them, and merit God's grace and be saved by them, St. Paul...says and repeats it three times --such a person's works are not only useless and a hindrance, but are also harmful. This is not the fault of the good works themselves, but of *the false confidence placed in the works*, contrary to God's clear Word." (TLSB, 3:7; Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration IV 37)

* Paul's life illustrates that it was not by works of the Law but by the grace of the Lord that he was justified. (SG, p.72, #12)

2) (SG, #13) -- in v.15, Paul calls himself the *worst of sinners!* Why?

* "Paul had been a Pharisee, who patterned his life most carefully after God's law. Paul, however, never forgot that he had been a blasphemer and a persecutor of Christianity [of Christ and His Church].... Paul had *rebelled against the true God* [the God that he had *deceived himself* into thinking he had been serving all those years], sought to *destroy Jesus' saving name, subverted faith and the Gospel, and robbed sinners of a heavenly treasure.*" (TPB, p.27)

(Point to consider: Do I, do we as Christians, ever do any of *these things*?)

* Note: "The present tense of the verb ["of whom I am the worst"] indicates that Paul's self-designation remains valid, even though he has been absolved and saved by Christ Jesus. Christians do not cease to sin until the life of the world to come. In this life we remain saints (people made holy through faith in Jesus) and sinners." (TLSB, 1:15)

3) (SG, #14) -- Note the richness of the "glorious Gospel (v.11)" in this brief "trustworthy saying" of 1 Timothy 1:15, "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" This is one of the most comforting passages in the Bible. Why is this so comforting?

* "Every word contains a sermon:

"*Christ* -- the eternal Son of God promised as the Messiah, the Anointed One;

Jesus -- true man, the Son of Mary, so named 'because He will save His people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21);

came -- sent by the Father, willingly leaving the glory that was His from eternity;

into the world -- humbly placing himself under the Law and being tempted as we are (but without sin), obedient even to the humiliating death on the cross;

to save -- His one great goal and accomplishment 'to seek and to save what was lost' (Luke 19:10);

*sinner*s -- [all of us; our sins eternally destroy us,] 'but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8)." (TPB, pp.26-27)

* We can safely and assuredly base our faith on the Gospel of Christ Jesus, for it is trustworthy. The *faithful and unbounded grace of God*, which Paul experienced in a tremendous way...Trustworthy, faithful sayings of pure Gospel truth that is absolutely reliable, and so "deserves full acceptance." (SG, p. 72, #14; TPB, p.26)

4. 1 Timothy 1:16-20, A firm foundation of the mercy and grace from God our Father through Christ Jesus, in whom we continue to "fight the good fight of faith."

a. v.16, God turned what was "worst" in Paul to a useful purpose. This became for all future believers an example of God's boundless mercy, a display of *His perfect unlimited patience*. (TPB, p. 27; TLSB, 1:16)

1) "When God delays judgment against sin, this patience is an occasion for repentance and salvation... God would also graciously deal with other sinners who would repent and believe in the future." (TLSB, 1:16)

2) "God does not condone what is "worst" in us. He doesn't nullify His judgment upon sin. His mercy and patience aim at faith and eternal life through Christ" (TPB, p.28).

* Peter 3:9 -- "The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wanting anyone to perish, but that all should come to repentance."

3) "When we contemplate our own sins, what patience God has shown also toward us! And what patience we must show as we tell of Christ to even the worst of sinners." (TPB, p.28)

b. v.17, Grateful praise and heartfelt doxology in the light of such boundless mercy!

c. (SG, #15). -- v. 18, "*fight the good fight...*". (EHV, NIV); "*wage the good warfare*" (ESV). In what way is the life of a Christian like warfare? How in particular was this a necessary "charge" of warfare for Timothy?

1) These words remind Timothy of his call to serve in Gospel ministry, reminding him by Whom he was chosen and ordained. (Similarly for our pastors today.) (TLSB, 1:18; TPB, p 29; SG p.73 #15)...

* Instruction to combat false teachers, to make sure that only the true Gospel of Grace in Christ is taught. He is charged in battle to silence those in Ephesus teaching different doctrines.

* His ministry would be an ongoing battle against Satan and his forces. See Ephesians 6:10-17. Timothy had been well fortified and equipped for fighting against sin and doctrinal error.

d. (SG, #16) -- v 19-20, "*holding faith and a good conscience.*" ...Without these, the battle is lost. The conscience is guided by God's Word of Truth, as faith is nourished by this means of grace, God's word. (TPB, pp. 29-30)

1) "As long as a Christian remains in faith, he or she will have a good conscience before God. One cannot keep his or her faith and enjoy the peace of God in one's heart *while playing fast and loose with the Word of God*. Such people will get *shipwrecked in the faith*. Paul mentions two teachers who had this sad experience." (SG, p. 73, #16)

2) Note: v. 20, "*handed over to Satan* that they may learn not to blaspheme." (ESV).

* Excommunication: "Paul excluded these two men from the church, which was considered a sanctuary from Satan's power. Out in the world, away from the

fellowship and care of the church, they would be taught not to blaspheme. The purpose of such drastic action was more remedial than punitive." (CSB, 1:20).

* "The goal of excommunication is that the sinner be led to repentance and be restored to the faith previously rejected." (TLSB, 1:20)

e. (SG, #17) -- Point to ponder: "Why do some fall away after being confirmed?"
Something to consider, in light of Matthew 7:24, our faith must rest on the firm foundation of God's Word, or Satan will overthrow it. (Oh, the need to keep growing in the truths of God's word... at any age.)

f. (SG, #18) -- "Teaching false doctrine is a form of blasphemy, because it dishonors God..." Christ gave His church on earth "the keys" to ultimately lead those in such grave sin to repentance and restoration. The declaration of God's judgment ("the binding key") is used with the goal and hope of the unrepentant false teacher and sinner coming to repentance and receiving the forgiveness of sins ("the loosing key"). (Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20). (SG, pp. 17, 73 #18; A study or reading of "The Keys" in Luther's Small Catechism, pp.327-341 [see reference at end of these notes.]

g. How grateful we should be for our church Synod where we receive God's Word in it's truth and purity, where our pastors are so faithful to the sound doctrine to which they've been entrusted. We are so blessed! "How Firm the Foundation" (opening hymn stanza of these notes above), the Foundation of this Faith we've been given!!! We continue to pray for our pastors! And pray for the Lord to raise up more pastors and teachers, who are trained, called, diligent, and faithful to God's Word!!

One more hymn about this firm foundation...

1 The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is His new creation
by water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
to be His holy bride;
with His own blood He bought her,
and for her life He died.

2 Elect from every nation,
yet one o'er all the earth;
her charter of salvation:
one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.

3 The Church shall never perish.
Her dear Lord to defend,
to guide, sustain, and cherish,
is with her to the end.
Tho' there be those that hate her
and strive to see her fail,
against both foe and traitor
she ever shall prevail.

4 Tho' with a scornful wonder
the world sees her oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping;
their cry goes up, "How long?"
and soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.

5 'Mid toil and tribulation
and tumult of her war
she waits the consummation
of peace forevermore
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great Church victorious
shall be the Church at rest.

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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. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO. 1986.

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Bible translations used:

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version