

TCC Sunday 22nd September 2013 – 1 Timothy 6v11-21

Title: “Timothy – informed, persuaded, inspired”

Purpose:

I want people to go away from 1 Timothy:

Understanding the issues, being persuaded of the dangers and motivated to take up the cause of Christ’s church that the gospel will never be subverted, snatched, silenced, sullied by those forces that regularly come against her.

- Timothy the Coached (informed)
- Timothy the Charged (persuaded)
- Timothy the Champion (inspired)

Introduction

Back in the late nineties, the BBC ran a highly popular series. At its height it was grossing 12 million viewers every Wednesday night – it was simply called “**HOW DO THEY DO THAT**”.

And they would look at all kinds of engineering feats, stunts and special effects. I confess that this is probably my kind of show, it is a bit of a hazard of the kind of mind that I have and perhaps you are the same that as you go through life you often find yourself asking the question, I wonder how that thing works.

It is not just mechanical things, or gadgets, it can be much more mundane things – let me give you a couple of examples:

- I have, for years, been fascinated by the way that radio presenters seem able to just make endless conversation in their chat shows
- So many times I have marvelled at perhaps people who are being interviewed on Television, how they manage to answer the really hard questions that are thrown at them
- And then there is those rousing speeches made by the leaders of nations – how is it that they seem to find just the right words, when some tragedy happens or at some great moment of history

Over the last few weeks, I have been reading a secular book called: “**The art of speeches and presentations** (The Secrets of Making People Remember What You Say)”.

It is written by **Philip Collins**, who at one time was Tony Blair’s speech writer.

Let me quote you just one important observation that he makes:

“All speeches can be divided into at least one of the following three functions:

1. **Information:** a speech whose principal function is to leave an audience better informed than they were before you began.
2. **Persuasion:** a speech whose principal function is to persuade an audience of a case that, before you began, had either never occurred to them or to which they had been actively hostile.
3. **Inspiration:** a speech whose principal function is to inspire the audience to do something that they had previously not considered doing or had been refusing to do or, occasionally, to carry on doing something.”

This morning

This morning we are returning one last time to the letter of FIRST TIMOTHY and I want to suggest to you that standing back for a moment we should realise that in these 6 short chapters we have nothing less than a memorable sermon, a carefully crafted letter, yes even a powerful speech that Paul delivers to Timothy and to the church of Jesus Christ there at Ephesus.

Our section

Our section this morning is Chapter 6 verses 11 to the end, you will find it in the blue church bibles on **page 1194**.

***** READ *****

Seeing the bigger picture

For us to truly appreciate the end of this letter, it will help us to not lose sight of both the beginning and the middle.

Paul leaves us a variety of clues that if we are suitably awake and not reading over things too rapidly, we will pick up and which will help us to better appreciate the overall thrust of the message in 1 Timothy.

So let me just make a few observations in this regard:

1. **FIRSTLY** – the letter of 1 Timothy has certain things in common with Galatians – Q. What are they? Well, putting it very simply – for both of these letters, there is a very lean beginning and an equally lean ending, Paul does not tend to do in these letters what he does in most others.

So you do not have any kind of real opening greeting, giving of thanks and prayer for the church or recipient of the letter.

At the end there is a notable absence of any final greetings.

So necessarily, we do well to ask Q. So why? And the answer is simply because there is a **GOSPEL THREATENING TREND occurring in the church. And at Ephesus, the problem revolves around some ALTERNATIVE TEACHING that is doing the rounds and which is THREATENING to unravel and even destroy the GOSPEL FOUNDATION that Paul had laid many years early when he planted the church.**

2. **SECONDLY** – there does seem to be a **strongly evident backbone** to this letter.
Q. Now what do I mean? Well, at the start of the letter (and we did actually mention this in passing last week) – at the start of the letter, we see that Paul gets right to the point and introduces the problem – false teachers drawing people away from the glorious gospel to something which is NOT the gospel, to something which only ever produces arguments, unsound speculations, envying, strife and which has at its root human pride and the pursuit of material gain.

And what we see is that every time Paul brings up the problem, it draws out of him some of the purest and most rousing teachings. So **in chapter 1** – we are given the first of five trustworthy sayings: 1 Timothy 1v15 – “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”.

In chapter 4, Paul brings up this primary problem of false teachers and unsound doctrine and he then gives us another trustworthy saying this time: 1 Timothy 4v8 “For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

And now one last time, here **in chapter 6**, Paul is returning to the main problem – the fact that SOUND DOCTRINE is being undermined and potentially replaced by UNSOUND and UNHEALTHY TEACHING – and therefore Paul does not disappoint – 1 Timothy 6v6 “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

3. **LASTLY** – I think it worth noticing that Paul, on each of the three occasions we have just mentioned in chapter 1, 4 and 6 – at the start, the middle and at the end – deploys the same strategy – he brings Timothy back to his calling.

Q. Now how does he do that, where do we see this? Well it is done by **jogging Timothy's memory**:

Chapter 1 verse 18 "Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight"

Chapter 4 verse 14 "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you."

And now in this section he does it one more time as well – we'll look at it as we get to it.

So let's make a start – I'm going to cover it in 3 sections:

11-12 then 13-16 and lastly 20-21

If you're wondering about verse 17-19, well this is where Paul takes a brief detour to round off something that he started earlier but didn't really quite finish, but as to the main flow of things it is – how you might say SUBSIDIARY.

OK - #1 then:

1. Timothy the coached (Chapter 6v11)

Sound advice - Stop boring

There is an often-quoted humorous quip which is frequently passed on to those who have to give a speech, or who have to craft gripping introductions to sermons – it goes like this:

"If you haven't struck oil in the first 3 minutes – then stop boring!!"

And this is pretty sound advice – but not advice that we would have to give to Paul – have a look at verse 11:

Paul begins, what we would call the finale of this letter to Timothy, with the words:

Verse 11 "**But you, man of God, flee from all this...**"

Good thing about Greek (emphasis)

One of the good things about Greek is that it lets you know when pronouns are supposed to be emphatic – and so reading this it goes "But **YOU**, man of God, flee from all this...".

I imagine, Timothy reading this and seeing in his mind's eye, the apostle looking directly at him and say Yes YOU Timothy – I'm talking to YOU!!

Man of God

However, that's not the only attention-grabber in this opening sentence – it goes on: "But you, **MAN OF GOD**...".

This expression is a significant one – if you are familiar with your OT then you will know that this is the title that is reserved for significant people, for prophets and kings – the list would include Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha and we could go on...

An when it comes to the NT, the only other place where this title comes up is in that great MEMORY VERSE:

2 Timothy 3v16&17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

So by carefully using this title for Timothy, Paul is deliberately raising the stakes, he is heavily turning up the CONTRAST controls so as to heighten the radical difference that there is to be between Timothy (Paul’s precious “Son in the faith”) and these false teachers.

In a way it kind of flatters Timothy that Paul would use this language to describe him. It immediately puts Timothy on his mettle, reminds him of his calibre in Paul’s estimation.

Flee ... Pursue

Then he proceeds to give Timothy his marching orders!

Very simple at one level – he is given the pattern that he needs to adopt – it is a repeatable pattern that we can pick up as well – he says FLEE and then PURSUE.

A simple application

A simple application that we ought to note in passing here is that we can easily have the tendency to get used to just focussing on the negative side of the equation and kind of then forgetting the other half of things.

So perhaps we say to ourselves, I really mustn’t use bad language, I must watch my P’s and Q’s! But we don’t go the next step and say, in fact what should come out of my mouth are things that will really have a positive impact, something that would be nicely seasoned with good spiritual salt.

A six part list

Timothy is then given this six part list and is given essentially all the ingredients that are going to typically make up a well-rounded MAN OF GOD.

This is how **Chuck Swindoll** outlines this list:

- Righteousness – a state of heart and mind that operates in harmony with the living God
- Godliness – an authentic and abiding desire to glorify God
- Faith – not living by sight, not framing our opinions on the seen and the tangible but trusting God to open the doors, to clear the pathways and solve the conflicts
- Love – seeking the highest good of the other person
- Endurance – this means to “abide under”, the idea of handling our lives in a stable, enduring, fluid manner
- Gentleness – this is strength under control, composure – especially in the face of opposition and being wronged

2. Timothy the charged (Chapter 6v12-16)

Having given Timothy a short and pithy rehearsal and reminder of what it is that he needs to aspire to as a classic mature man of God – Paul goes on from the initial INFORMATIONAL stage to that which is PERSUASIONAL, Paul is building up to the next level in this FINALE to 1 Timothy.

I wonder if you noticed how Paul layers up one command after another – I suppose if you like plays on words, you might call this a bit of a “command performance”!!

Flee ... Pursue...

Fight the good fight

Take hold of the eternal life

All powerful imperatives.

Fight the good fight

Fight the good fight we came across in Chapter 1 and verse 18 – here the picture is slightly different as the Greek word for fight is different – here it is more to do with a struggle, an athletic contest and it does remind us that we really can't be passive if we are going to be achievers in the Kingdom of God.

Take hold of the eternal life

The second part of verse 12 reads “Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

This is Paul urging Timothy to get a grip on his goal and to get a grip on eternal life type living.

Important milestones

Notice how Paul does his usual trick and makes good use of the **IMPORTANT MILESTONES** in Timothy's life and gets him to set gaze upon them once again.

Let me really emphasize this – how very important MILESTONE MOMENTS are in our lives. You are meant to remember and revisit them on a regular basis – Q. Why? Because we will always need to go back to them:

- When the going gets tough
- When we begin to lose hold of our calling
- When our arms grow weak

The charge

See how in Verse 13 Paul delivers his CHARGE to Timothy. You have to say that it is very solemn.

Verse 13-16 “In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen”

He is bringing God the Father and the faithful Son, Jesus Christ, who he mentions was one who was true to his own confession when push came to shove and he had to stand up to his greatest trial.

So Timothy is to keep this command without spot or blame – he is to strive for a flawless performance.

Paul is not trying to put things beyond Timothy's reach, he is simply trying to set a standard for him to strive for and to aim at.

Targets to aim at

Is it not true that we all need to be pushed from time to time – Q. Otherwise what happens? Well – I think we all tend to just settle back and take things somewhat more easily. We edge across from being active Christians to being passive observer Christians.

Paul ends his charge with this lovely doxology – Paul is really hitting the high spot and very deliberately he is wanting to PERSUADE and impact Timothy, to urge him seriously to a particular course of action.

Q. What is that course of action? Q. What is “this command” – that he is to keep? Well it is all of the advice Paul has been given in regard to neutralizing the effect that these false teachers and their toxic doctrine is having.

Recap

Paul began coaching Timothy – giving him that informational blast of fresh energy

Then he has moved on to persuade him through successive layers of commands leading up to this great charge in the sight of God and Jesus Christ.

Finally we come to the closing part

1. Timothy the coached
2. Timothy the charged

3. Timothy the champion (Chapter 6v20-21)

The interlude v17-19

Now as I did say verses 17-19 form a very brief interlude before resuming his final motivational push with Timothy. They are to do with those that are rich in the things of this world.

1 Tim 6v17-19 “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

Q. So why does he bring this subject up? Well, I think it is simply because just earlier on in the first half of this chapter he was showing that a key motivation for the false teachers was greed and a basic love of money which was leading them into all kinds of evil and causing them to wander away from the faith.

However, Paul knows that within the wider church at Ephesus, there are numbers of people who are truly wealthy, various of them are what you might call the patrons of the church, making the larger houses available to host meetings etc. and that he does not want people to go away with the impression that everyone who has been given a lot of material wealth is necessarily bad.

So really these verses are balancing verses and also instructive for those in that position so that they do not forget they carry a larger responsibility and not just the privilege of possessing wealth.

Timothy the champion

Well, we come to the closing verses - and I'm calling this "**Timothy the Champion**".

And Paul, one final time, really in summary form gives us the headlines for this whole letter.

He must actively turn away from everything that is – well to put it simply "SUB-CHRISTIAN" – anything that might look a bit like the Christian faith, something even very similar to the GOSPEL, but which is not actually the REAL DEAL.

Sects – majoring on minors

Q. Do you know one of the things that non-Christian sects tend to have in common? (People like JW's, Christadelphians etc.)

They either tend to major on minors – they make a very big deal about things that either don't really matter and are entirely superficial

OR they specialise on the speculative – they take books or sections in the bible that are hard to be entirely dogmatic on and in these areas they spend most of their time, books like Revelation and the like.

Timothy must not allow himself to be side tracked to that which never saved a single soul.

Paul finishes by calling Timothy to be a CHAMPION, to champion the cause of the gospel and to GUARD it with all his energy – to contend for that which has been entrusted to his care.

As Jude puts it in Jude 3 Timothy needs to: "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."

No greetings

Well, there are no greeting from or to anybody – because Paul knows the stakes are way to high and he cannot afford to fail to get his message across.

Motivational messages

They say that many messages or great speeches that have been successfully delivered have ultimately backfired simply because when they were given they did not make specific enough what the message was and what was to be expected.

Well Paul, has coached Timothy, he has persuaded him and now he has given him his task to be steward, to be the protector, to be that one who will CHAMPION the cause of the gospel.

Paul will not allow anything to steal away the impact of his message.

The grace

The most he will allow is what he does in every one of his letters, and that is remind people that which is at the heart of the gospel – he conclude "GRACE be with you". (It's a plural YOU as Paul always intends that these personal letters will be also public letters to the whole church).