

Introduction

Today we begin a new series. We are going to look at the Pastoral Letters. A group of letters from Paul to his two proteges...Timothy and Titus.

The year is 64 AD. Paul is near his death. His life mission is coming to a close and much like Jesus, he needs to hand the mission to someone else. Just as Jesus prepared, directed, instructed and encouraged His disciples, Paul is doing the same in these pastoral letters.

The key to understanding these three letters is of course...context. We need to set the background and events that were occurring in the first century so that we can effectively understand the meaning and application of the text.

As I teach with every series that we do, context is king. Historical and cultural understanding are the foundation of interpreting the text. Letters to Timothy need to be interpreted differently than letters to Rome, Corinth or other places Paul instructed.

These three letters are unique. They are pastoral letters. What does that mean exactly? Well if you wanted to put in today's context, Paul, Timothy and Titus ran a church consulting business. They did not see themselves as the Pastors of these churches...their primary function was not to shepherd the flock....rather they were to guide and instruct those who would lead and pastor the church.

Their role, as they saw it, was to establish the structure and train the leaders. Timothy and Titus would be Paul's envoys to address problems that specifically required someone with Apostolic authority to guide them.

In the face of the false teachings, Timothy and Titus were given authority by Paul as apostolic delegates. The unique authority of the apostle was thereby extended through the ministry of these two men to the churches at Ephesus and Crete. As we have said, their ministry cannot be equated with that of the modern pastor. They were sent to deal with specific circumstances in the name of the apostle. That is, they went under the command of Paul and were commissioned to apply his commands to the circumstances in these churches

In other words, they didn't focus on shepherding the flock...but rather combating false teaching. They were there to establish stable leadership in the churches rather than to serve as pastors themselves on a long term basis. They knew that they were moving on and would need to establish leaders and structure. Also, they were giving Paul's specific instructions to the specific church...in this case Ephesus....not always setting unwavering doctrine for all churches in all circumstances.

That being said, their churches needed pastoral concern, gifts and personal touches that they hoped to establish in the elders and leaders of the those congregations.

Although not much is said in the Pastorals regarding church organization, great emphasis is placed on church leadership

So for example Timothy is going to be left at Ephesus to establish and grow the leadership structure of that church. Paul is guiding him regarding the specific needs of the church at Ephesus. The relationship here is considered short term rather than life long. Timothy will not be the person called to shepherd the church at Ephesus long term. He will establish and train that person or people in leadership roles.

Timothy will be Paul's representative or lead consultant.

Perhaps the most unique feature of the Pastoral Letters is the repeated insistence on ethical and moral integrity. There is a deep concern that the two apostolic delegates, the church leaders, and everyday Christians live morally above reproach. This is not merely one theme among many or a theme reserved for the second "practical" half of a letter, but one that is inextricably connected to sound teaching, woven into the fabric of the whole corpus.

Christians are not only to live lives of inner holiness; they are to live in such a way publicly as to demonstrate the moral superiority of the Christian way.

In these letters we will see Paul instruct Timothy much as James might have. He focused not only sound faith, but sound faith that expresses itself in sound living. A show me your works style. It is as though he was increasingly disgusted with the "slurry" of falsehood in teaching and living, the filthy mixture of corrupted doctrine and morals that he found in his theological opponents. He realized that what was needed desperately was not only truth in word but truth in the lives of teachers and other church leaders. What characterizes the Pastoral Letters most is not doctrine but doctrine blended with holy living.

Timothy

Timothy was a native of Lystra in Phrygia. MAP

Acts 16:1–5 (ESV) 1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. 3

His father was Greek, and, as we will see in Second Timothy, his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were godly Jewish women. It was through the influence of these women that Timothy learned the Hebrew Scriptures as a child. Paul calls Timothy a "true son in the faith" (1:2), suggesting that he was converted during Paul's first missionary visit to Lystra (see Acts 14:6, 19).

Paul calls Timothy his "True Son in the Faith" and it is most likely that Timothy was saved when hearing Paul teach during His First Missionary Journey to Lystra. Paul had been run out of Iconium and went to Timothy's home town.

Acts 14:4–7 (ESV) 4 But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. 5 When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, 7 and there they continued to preach the gospel.

Perhaps a key factor in Timothy's decision to follow Jesus was to see what his home town did to Paul.

Acts 14:19–23 (ESV) 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

At the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey, Timothy was chosen by Paul to accompany him and Silas .

Acts 16:1–5 (ESV) 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

Since they would be preaching to Jews, Paul had Timothy circumcised, and evidently the leadership of the church laid hands on Timothy . He traveled with Paul and Silas helping them in their evangelization of Philippi and Thessalonica.

Relatively quickly, Paul begins to use Timothy as his lead envoy. Leaving him in places to carry out Paul's instructions amongst the churches.

Apparently he remained in Thessalonica and then joined Paul and Silas in Berea. In Corinth, Paul employed Timothy as a liaison between himself and the church in Thessalonica. Later he used Timothy as a liaison again, this time to the church in Corinth, to teach the believers there

1 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV) 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

Later in his letter to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 16:10–11 (ESV) 10 When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. 11 So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.

Timothy reappears in Ephesus (Acts 19:22), where Paul commissioned Timothy and Erastus to prepare the churches in Macedonia for his arrival. Timothy remained in Macedonia and accompanied Paul to Corinth, where presumably Paul wrote his letter to

the Romans. Paul closes the book of Romans indicating that Timothy is with him at Corinth.

Acts 19:21–22 (ESV) 21 Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

Romans 16:21 (ESV) 21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

Then in Acts 19 we see that Timothy is sent by Paul to Macedonia...specifically Ephesus which is in Modern Day Turkey. While Paul is traveling, he leaves Timothy as his lead envoy to the struggling church in Ephesus.

Ephesus

I was blessed to be able to tour and see the town of Ephesus during a trip a few years ago. Tammy and I walked amongst the old ruins there that remain as they did during Paul and Timothy's time there. Slides 1-6 as I talk

Ephesus was a huge port city One of the largest and most impressive cities in the ancient world, a political, religious, and commercial center in Asia Minor. The city played a significant role in the spread of early Christianity. Ephesus and its inhabitants are mentioned more than 20 times in the NT

The ancient city of Ephesus located in western Asia Minor at the mouth of the Cayster River, was an important seaport. Situated between the Maeander River to the south and the Hermus River to the north, Ephesus had excellent access to both river valleys that allowed it to flourish as a commercial center. Due to the accumulation of silt deposited by the river, the present site of the city is approximately five to six miles inland.

Under the Romans, Ephesus thrived, reaching the pinnacle of its greatness during the first and second centuries of the Christian era. At the time of Paul, Ephesus was probably the fourth largest city in the world, with a population estimated at 250,000. During the reign of the emperor Hadrian, Ephesus was designated the capital of the Roman province of Asia.

Since Ephesus was both a Roman and a port city, all types of religions, cultures, faiths, beliefs, and myths flowed through this town from all over the world.

However, the greatest worship in Ephesus was towards Artemis Images 7-8

The most famous statue was located in the city of Ephesus, the official “temple keeper” for Artemis. Artemis was the chief deity of Ephesus, and her temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, the Romans called her Diana. The temple ceremonies were carried out by priests who were eunuchs and priestesses who were virgins. They conducted the daily ceremonies caring for the deity and for the gifts brought by worshipers, as well as an annual festival on May 25, when numerous statues

of the goddess were carried in procession to the amphitheater in Ephesus for a celebration of music, dancing, and drama.

Often images of Artemis IMAGE 9 were made out of silver and stone. SEE IMAGE. The image of Artemis always included many eggs and breasts as she was considered the fertility goddess.

While many religions were studied and practiced in Ephesus, Artemis was by far the most important. Also, as a port city, Ephesus was unique in that it housed one of the greatest libraries in the world Images 10-11

The Port City of Corinth which is not too far away is like Las Vegas...it was a church gone wild. In contrast, Ephesus was more like Harvard. It was more sophisticated, educated, refined, and a place where world thoughts are embraced...or at least used to be... and important world shaping decisions are made. It is in Ephesus where the next generation of great minds were shaped. It was a place that could send it's "enlightened" sons across the Roman Empire. This town was a hotspot of everything in many ways. It was the Rome of Macedonia. A quarter of a million people lived there....and millions traveled through there.

And Paul brought the message of Christ to this pagan but sophisticated city.

The church at Ephesus was started during Paul's Second Journey.

The word Ephesus means desirable, and in many ways; it was certainly a pleasant place to live. Paul journeyed to Ephesus during his second missionary trip and stayed there for two years so that all—Jews and Greeks who lived there would hear the word of the Lord

Acts 19:1–4 (ESV) 1 Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.”

Acts 19:4–8 (ESV) 4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all. 8 And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:9–10 (ESV) 9 But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 19:11–15 (ESV) 11 And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.” 14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. 15 But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” 16 And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Look at the impact that God allowed Paul to have in Ephesus.

Acts 19:16–20 (ESV) 16 And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. 18 Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. 19 And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

They burned books in front of one of the largest libraries in the world! IMAGE 12 The entire city began to turn to Jesus. This is incredible...but even more so when you realize the culture and pagan influences from around the world in Ephesus.

On May 25th each year the entire Roman City Celebrated Artemis the great goddess. It was a huge market day for the merchants. The courtyards outside the coliseum were huge trinket and idol shops IMAGE 13 and 14 . No Disney didn't perfect the souvenir shop...Romans nailed that long ago.

Acts 19:23–27 (ESV) 23 About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. 25 These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, “Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. 26 And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. 27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”

Acts 19:28–34 (ESV) 28 When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” 29 So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s companions in travel. IMAGE 14 30 But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. 31 And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture

into the theater. 32 Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Acts 19:35–41 (ESV) 35 And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. 40 For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Acts 20:1–2 (ESV) 1 After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.

It is here that Paul leaves Timothy as his envoy in Ephesus. This is when we see Timothy is Ephesus and Paul's first letter to him arrives.

Paul says he urged Timothy to stay at Ephesus while he went to Macedonia. These are events from Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 20:1). This provides the reason for the letter, instructing Timothy in how to manage the church in Paul's absence. Timothy is still quite young. Timothy would have needed this letter toward the beginning of his time in Ephesus, not years later, so it is best to assume that Paul wrote it very shortly after his departure. Since Paul spent three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31) and his departure was toward the end of his third missionary journey, the best date for 1 Timothy would be around 56 or early 57 A.D.

Eventually Paul returns to Ephesus but only for a moment to talk to the elders there.

Acts 20:17–24 (ESV) 17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18 And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not account my life of

any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

And then..Paul tells them what he came to say...

Acts 20:25–32 (ESV) 25 And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 20:36–38 (ESV) 36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Paul will eventually leave Jerusalem arrested but as a Roman Citizen demanding a trial in Rome. He would travel to Rome where he is imprisoned...it is during that imprisonment and before Paul's execution that Timothy receives the Letter of Second Timothy

2 Timothy is written by Paul from Prison, in difficult circumstances 2 Timothy was definitely written after the other prison letters of Colossians and Ephesians. Paul's outlook for his own life has darkened considerably from his earlier prison letters, and he doesn't expect to live much longer (2 Tim 4:6-8). This may have been due to an unfavorable first legal hearing (2 Tim 4:16) occurring in between the earlier prison letters and this one. These circumstances can only have come about after the upbeat end of the account in the book of Acts. Therefore, we should consider 2 Timothy to be chronologically the last letter of Paul that appears in the Bible, written around 63 A.D.

So in a short time. The church at Ephesus received three letters. Two were addressed to Timothy and one was addressed to the Church at Ephesus.

First Timothy was written before Paul was in prison...Then Ephesians and Second Timothy were written by Paul from Prison...likely Rome in 62-64 AD.

In the Book of Ephesians, Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians commending them of their faith and love of Christ. They were devout in their faith and passionate about sharing the love of Christ. During the early years of the church, they appear to become well-organized which helped them expand to share the love and will of God. This church body was multi-ethnic and diverse through Jews, Gentiles, and even differing nationalities. Paul commends them in his letter:

Ephesians 6:23–24 (ESV) 23 Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

There is more to consider about the city of Ephesus. Most Catholics believe that the Disciple John lived in Ephesus as an old man before writing Revelation in Patmos...and island just off the coast of Ephesus.

In fact, more importantly to the Catholics, they believe that since John was entrusted to care for Mary by Jesus at the cross...that Mary lived in Ephesus and died here. There is a Catholic shrine/church to Mary in the hills outside of town. Many pilgrimage there to walk through the small house church and drink the holy water from a fountain nearby.

So how did Ephesus do? What became of Paul's Warnings about wolves from within? Sadly they are recorded by John's own hand....in Revelation.

Revelation 2:1–7 (ESV) 1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2 “ ‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Under the weight of the immoral and pagan-filled culture, the church maintained the letter of the law, but they had lost the Spirit of the law (Romans 2:9). Serving Christ had become so routine—they had lost their passion to serve Jesus like they once had. Their actions showed they loved Christ, but their hearts were far from it.

So did they? Did they return to their first love...did they repent? Well let me show you the Church at Ephesus today....IMAGES 15-20

We are going to look at two letters written to Timothy by Paul.... Timothy is Paul's envoy. First Timothy was written by Paul when he was in Macedonia....around 57 AD...then the congregation received the Book of Ephesians...and then in 63AD or so 2 Timothy receives the last letter that Paul would write. We will begin our study of 1 Timothy next week.

I want to encourage each of you to read about this story each day of the series. Focus on The two letters to Timothy....The Book of Ephesians and the Story of Ephesus in Acts 16-20.

Paul had some incredible things to teach Timothy and through his writings God has a great deal to teach us. Our church is looking to the future and investing in my Timothy. It is during this series that we will ordain Grayson as our Family Pastor and begin the

Protégé Week 1
Frank Burns MDiv

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transition to our future. Invite your friends, family and coworkers to join us in this journey. Let's Pray.