



Today's Message

Date: January 14, 2024
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas
Title: Lessons Learned by Reading Timothy's Mail
Or, An Introduction to the First Pastoral Epistle
Text: 1 Timothy 1:1–2 (ESV)

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

² To Timothy, my true child in the faith:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Introduction: Finally free from his Roman imprisonment, Paul set out to check on the churches that he had planted. He visited some and sent emissaries to others. His goal was to strengthen each of them in their faith and equip them for service.

It had been at least five years since Paul had warned the Ephesian elders with the chilling words: *I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them* (Acts 20:29–30). His words were coming true, so Paul sent Timothy, his dearest coworker, to set things in order in Ephesus. Soon after Timothy arrived, he received this letter from the aging apostle.

We should not rush past the introductory words of epistles. If read carefully, they usually give a preview of elements contained in the letter. In this first sermon, consider the author, recipient, and greeting found in 1 Timothy. They are far from ordinary.

I. Paul was the author of this letter. 1

- A. Paul carried out a divine mission.
- B. Paul proclaimed a divine message.
- C. Paul served under divine authority.
 - 1. He ministered under the authority of God the Savior.
 - 2. He ministered under the authority of Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. Paul wrote this letter to Timothy—for the church. 2a

- A. Paul acknowledged Timothy's loyal affection.
- B. Paul declared Timothy's mutual faith.
- C. Paul strengthened Timothy's authority in ministry.

III. Paul greeted Timothy with theologically rich words. 2b

- A. Paul breathed new meaning into common greetings.
- B. Paul used his greeting to embolden Timothy for his task.

The church in every age faces a crisis—the failure to proclaim and protect the truth. Every Christian must heed Paul's pastoral instruction lest we fail in the work entrusted to us.

Today's take-home truth: Protect the truth by strengthening the church.