

Paul's first letter to Timothy

When Paul was telling people about Jesus Christ, Timothy helped him. He and Paul were good friends. Paul wrote to Timothy to tell him how to be a good disciple of Jesus Christ and how to help God's people. He also told Timothy about leaders in the church and how they should live.

¹ I, Paul, am writing to you, Timothy. God and Jesus Christ chose me as an apostle of Jesus Christ. They told me to spread Jesus' teaching everywhere. God has saved us, and Jesus Christ is the one who will take us to heaven. ² You are like my son, because I was the first to tell you about Jesus Christ. So now you believe in him.

May God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord be kind to you and have pity on you and give you peace.

About wrong teaching

³ When I was on my way to Macedonia, I saw you at Ephesus, and I said to you, "Stay here at Ephesus." I persuaded you and so you stayed, and I want you to go on staying there, because some of the people have been teaching lies. That is very wrong. So say to them, "Don't teach people wrong things, ⁴ and don't take any notice of stories that aren't true and don't spend all your time thinking about the names of your ancestors. When you keep thinking about those things, you argue. Those kinds of things won't help us to

know what God wants. But when we trust him we know what he wants us to do.”

⁵ You must tell them that so that they will love each other. If they have good clean minds and if they do what they know is good and if they trust God, they will have real love. ⁶ But some people aren't doing those kinds of things any more. They keep on arguing with silly words. They are like people who are lost and who have forgotten where they are. ⁷ They want to teach God's laws to others, but they don't know what they are talking about. They speak boldly like wise people but they don't know anything. ⁸ We know that God's laws are good if we follow them properly. ⁹ We know that those laws were only made for people who do wrong and not for good people. They were made for those who don't obey God and don't obey other people either. Those people turn their backs on God. They hate him and they live as they like. They keep on doing wrong. Some murder people, even killing their fathers and mothers. ¹⁰ They take other people's wives or husbands. Those sort of men and women do all kinds of bad things with their bodies. They steal people and take them away. They tell lies and they tell people lies about each other. They are always doing wrong things like that. But God has taught us to do what is good. ¹¹ And he has given me the good news to tell others. God is very great and we must praise him.

About Paul praising God for his kindness

¹² I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, the one who has made me strong to work for him. And I thank him because he has trusted me and chosen me to do his work. ¹³ I used to speak badly about him and I hated him and made trouble for God's people. I was a proud and cruel man. But God had pity on me, because I didn't know his Son Jesus then, and so I didn't know I was doing wrong. ¹⁴ And our God was very kind to me. He helped me to trust in Jesus Christ and to love other people because all of us have fellowship with Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ Jesus Christ came down from heaven into the world to save us sinners. That is very true and we should believe it. And I am the very worst sinner. ¹⁶ But God had pity on me so that Jesus Christ could show other people that he would keep on waiting for them. Jesus Christ kept on waiting for me, even though I was so bad, until I trusted him. He wanted other people to know he would wait for them too, in the same way he waited for me. He will wait for them until they believe in him and he makes them alive forever.

¹⁷ Let us praise God our King who rules forever. He cannot die, he will live forever. We can't see him, but he is the only God. So let us honour him forever because he is so great. Amen.

¹⁸ You are like my son, and you must do what I tell you, because I am following the words God gave some people when they spoke before about you. When you fight against Satan, think carefully about the words they spoke. ¹⁹ And

keep trusting in Jesus Christ and doing what you know is right.

Some people know the right thing to do but they haven't done it, they have done wrong and they don't believe in God any more. ²⁰ Two men, Hymenaeus and Alexander, have kept on doing wrong, and I have given them to Satan, so that he can control them. Because of that they will know that they have done wrong and stop speaking badly about God.

2

About people meeting at church

¹ Timothy, when any of you pray to God, I want you to thank him and ask him to give everyone what they need. ² You should pray for kings and for all other leaders. You should pray for them so that they will look after us, and we can live peacefully in a quiet place and obey God and do what is right.

³ It is good when we pray to God. He will hear us and be pleased with us. He is the one who saves us, ⁴ and he wants to save everyone. He wants us to know the truth, ⁵ because he alone is the one God, and there are no others like him. And there is only one person who can take us to him so that we can be together, and that is the man, Jesus Christ. ⁶ Jesus didn't refuse to give himself but he died for us so that at that time he could set us all free. Because of that we know that God wants to save all of us. ⁷ And because of that God chose me to be an apostle and to tell people about Jesus Christ. That is true. I am not

lying, I am speaking the truth. God sent me to the people who are not Jews to tell them the truth, so that they can hear and trust in Jesus Christ.

⁸ Listen! When people go to church, when they meet together, I want the men to pray to God. Those men who lift up their hands to pray must not argue angrily, but they must pray to God quietly because they are his people.

⁹ And I don't want the women to wear the wrong kind of clothes that will make us feel ashamed. They should wear the right kind of clothes. And they shouldn't make themselves beautiful with gold bangles and lovely necklaces and expensive clothes and doing different things to their hair. ¹⁰ But if they keep busy doing good for other people, that's what will make them beautiful. If they say to each other, "We are Christians and we worship God," they should do good work. Then they will be beautiful.

¹¹ When the men teach the women, the women should not be proud but they should listen to them quietly. ¹² I do not want the women to teach the men or lead them. They must listen quietly to the men. ¹³ I am saying this to you because God made Adam first and then Eve. ¹⁴ The snake tricked Eve and not Adam. It was the woman who didn't obey God and listened to the snake. ¹⁵ If a woman doesn't shame other people but loves them and trusts God and has a clean mind, then God will save her when she has children.

About church leaders

¹ If any man wants to lead God's people and look after them, then he is wanting a good work. Truly that work is good.

² But what kind of person should lead God's people? He must be good all the time. He must have only one wife. He must only think about what is good. He must speak gently without getting angry. When strangers come, he must ask them into his home and make them comfortable. And he must be good at teaching people God's word. ³ He must not get drunk or be a troublemaker. He must be gentle with people and peaceful. And he must not love money. ⁴ He must look after his own family well and control his children so that they obey him. ⁵ If a man can't look after his own family, how can he look after God's people? He can't do it.

⁶ But a church leader mustn't be someone who has only known God for a short time, he should be someone who has known God for a long time. If he has only known God for a short time, he might be proud and he might think, "I am an important person." If he thinks that, then God will say, "That person is very bad." Long ago Satan too thought he was important. But God said, "Satan is bad." That kind of person shouldn't be a leader over God's people. ⁷ When people who don't know God see a man leading God's people, they should say, "That man is very good." But if they say, "He is bad," then he shouldn't be a leader over God's people because

Satan will control him and those people who don't know God will shame him.

About church helpers

⁸ Church helpers must also be good. When people see them they will say, "Those people are very good." But those helpers mustn't have two minds. They must not drink too much wine or be greedy for money. ⁹ They must keep holding on to the truth that God has made clear to us and always do what they know is right. ¹⁰ If any man wants this work, you should test him to see if he is good. If he is good he can work for God.

¹¹ The wives of the helpers must also be good women. When people see them they will say, "Those women are very good." They must not talk about people to spread things around and make trouble but they must only think about what is good. They must be good and honest all the time.

¹² A church helper must have only one wife. He must look after his children and his family well. ¹³ If he works well, people will see him and say, "He does good work." And he will speak boldly and tell others that he trusts Jesus Christ.

About the important word that was hidden

¹⁴ I want to see you. As I write this letter to you now, I am thinking that I will see you soon. ¹⁵ But maybe I will not see you soon. If I have to wait for a while, when you read this you will know what we who belong to God's family should be doing. We belong to God's family, the God who is alive today and always. And it is we, God's

people, who hold on to the truth about God and keep it safe.

¹⁶ God's word is very good. Truly that word is important that was hidden before, the one that tells us about Jesus Christ:

He came into the world, he became a person like us.

God's Spirit has shown us that Jesus has done what God wanted him to do.

God's angels have seen him.

Some of God's people have told others about him all over the world.

And some of the people in the world believe now that Jesus is God's Son.

But God has taken Jesus back again to heaven.

4

About teachers who tell lies

¹ God's Spirit tells us that some people will later reject God after trusting in him at first. They will believe in evil spirits that tell lies and they will follow their teaching. ² Other people who tell lies won't think about the bad things they have done and they won't be ashamed of them any more. So they will spread those lies to those people.

³ People like that say, "Don't marry. It is wrong to get married." And they say, "It is wrong to eat some foods, so don't eat them." But God made all those foods for us to eat. We people who trust in God and know the truth can thank him for those foods and eat them. ⁴⁻⁵ God made everything when he spoke long ago. Everything God made is good, and we mustn't refuse anything. We

should take the food he gives us and thank him for it. When we do that, the food becomes good for us to eat.

About a good servant of Jesus Christ

⁶ If you tell these things to God's people, you will be working well for Jesus Christ. You should always remember the things that God's people believe and you should keep on following the true teaching. ⁷ Some people tell each other silly stories. Don't listen to them and don't tell other people those stories, because they are no good. But keep following God all the time.

⁸ We look after our bodies and that is good. But if we keep busy thinking about God, that is better, because we will be blessed in this life and forever. ⁹ What I am telling you is true. So you should think about it carefully.

¹⁰ We work for God without stopping and we will go on working for him, because we hope in him. He is the living God, and he saves those of us who trust in him and he wants to save all people.

¹¹ You must tell all this to the people where you live. ¹² Some people might laugh at you because you are young, but you must not let them do that. You yourself must keep on doing what is right so that God's people can see that you are good and they will also know what is right for them to do. Say and do only what is right and think about what is good. Trust God and love other people.

¹³ I will come to you later. So keep busy until I come. Read God's word and teach it to the people there and show them the right way to live.

¹⁴ You know that some men told you before about God's word to you. At the same time the church elders laid their hands on you and God's Spirit made you strong. Don't forget that, ¹⁵ but keep on working for God. You should keep busy and do good so that people can see that you are growing stronger. ¹⁶ Watch yourself and keep on telling people God's word and don't stop doing that. When you keep telling them his word, God will save you and also those who listen to you.

5

About Timothy speaking to people

¹ If an old man does something wrong, don't speak angrily to him but speak quietly. You should speak to him in the same way that you speak to your father. And speak to young men as though you are speaking to your brothers.

² Speak to old women as though you are speaking to your mother, and to young women as though you are speaking to your sisters. Speak kindly with clean thoughts.

About old widows

³ If widows are living alone, be kind to them.

⁴ But some men and women may have a mother or a grandmother who is a widow. They should be looking after her, because she looked after them when they were little. If they look after her now that she is a widow, God will be pleased.

⁵ Is there a widow who has no one to look after her and she is living alone? She has put her hope in God. She always prays to him, asking him day and night to help her. ⁶ But some widows only think about themselves. They want too much food and drink and beautiful clothes to wear. They don't trust in God. They live like dead people, without thinking.

⁷ Tell God's people from me that they should look after widows so that no one will blame them. ⁸ It is really bad if a person doesn't take care of his family. It is as though he is rejecting God. It is wrong when people who don't know God do that kind of thing, but it is worse if God's people do it.

⁹ I want you to write down the names of the widows, so that God's people can look after them. Which widows should they look after? They shouldn't be looking after all of them but only the old widows who are over 60 years old, ones who have had only one husband, ¹⁰ and who have been good to other people. What kind of good things have they done? They have brought their children up well, and they have looked after strangers, and have helped God's people and people in trouble. And they have been busy doing all kinds of good things. Those are the kind of widows whose names you should write down.

About young widows

¹¹ Write the names of those old widows, but if any widows are not yet 60 years old, don't write their names down, because later on they may want to marry again and then maybe they will

turn their backs on Jesus Christ. ¹² If they do that, they will be breaking the promise they made to Jesus Christ before and other people will see them and blame them. Jesus Christ will see them and blame them too. ¹³ Young widows like that become lazy and wander from house to house. Then they talk about other people when they aren't there and make trouble for them. And they say things they shouldn't say.

¹⁴ I think that those widows should marry again and have children and look after their husbands and their children. Then people who hate us won't say anything bad about us who belong to God. ¹⁵ Some widows have already turned their backs on God and are following Satan now.

¹⁶ If a Christian woman has widows in her family, she should look after them herself. She must not let other Christians look after them. She must look after them herself, so that the other Christians can look after the widows who live alone.

About church elders

¹⁷ The church elders who work for God help people to follow him. So you must pay them. If they do good work and teach people God's word and show them how to behave, you should pay them more. ¹⁸ God's word tells us,

“If a bullock works for you treading on seeds so that the skins come off, you shouldn't tie up its mouth. When you do that it can't eat. So let your bullock eat some of the seeds.”

And it also tells us,

“Workers should be paid for their work.”

¹⁹ Sometimes people blame the church elders for doing something wrong. If one person speaks to you about it, don't take any notice. Only listen if two or three people see him doing wrong and come and tell you. ²⁰ But if an elder keeps on doing something wrong, blame him in front of the other elders so that when the other elders hear what you say they will be afraid and not do anything wrong themselves.

²¹ I am telling you this in front of God and Jesus Christ and the angels. You must obey everything I have told you. Don't speak good words to some people and bad words to others. Speak the same way to everyone. ²² Don't choose church leaders and lay hands on them quickly. And this is another thing. If other people do wrong, don't go with them but keep doing the right thing all the time.

²³ Timothy, you only drink water, but you should drink a little wine too to make you better, because you are often sick. Wine is very good medicine for your stomach if you drink a little.

²⁴ When some people do wrong, many others find out about it quickly before a judge can blame them. But when some other people do wrong, others don't find out about it quickly but only later. ²⁵ In the same way, some people do good things and many people find out about it. But sometimes people do good and no one knows about it. But the good things they do cannot stay hidden forever.

6

About servants

¹ For some of God's people, bosses have paid money to others for them so that they can work for those bosses. But you must tell those servants from me not to be angry with their bosses but to work well for them. If the servants don't work well, other people will see that, and they will speak badly about God's name and about our teaching.

² But some bosses are Christians. So tell their servants this message from me, and say, "Don't think, 'My boss is no good,' because they are like your own brothers. Those bosses that you work for are also Christians. So you should love them and because of that you should do even better work for them."

About lying words and true words

So you must tell your people those things.
³ If anyone teaches something different to other people, then he is not holding on to the truth that Jesus Christ our Lord taught them, the teaching about doing God's will. ⁴⁻⁵ If they teach lies, they are saying to each other, "I know God," but they don't know him. They don't know anything. They say to each other, "I am an important person," and they want to argue about things that aren't true. It is wrong, because they become jealous of one another and say bad words to each other. They think bad things about each other. They don't listen to God's true teaching any more, because they can't think

properly. They think, "If I follow God, I will get a lot of money."

⁶ It is true that if you follow God's road you should be happy. You should be happy just as though you are rich. But you mustn't keep wanting other things. You must say, "I have enough." Only then will you be really happy.

⁷ When we were born in this world, what did we bring with us? Nothing! We were born empty-handed. And when we die, what will we take with us? Nothing at all. ⁸ But if we have food and clothes in this world, that is enough.

⁹ Those people who want to get rich are following the wrong road. It is the bad things in their minds that tempt them to do wrong. And in the end they will lose everything and bad things will happen to them. ¹⁰ I have told you that because, when people want a lot of money very much, then all kinds of bad things happen to them. Some people have stopped following God, because they wanted money so much. And now they are very sad. It is as though they are cutting their own hearts with a sharp knife.

Paul's last words to Timothy

¹¹ But you are a man of God. So don't do any of those wrong things I have told you about but keep on doing what is good. And don't stop following God. You must keep going straight with faith and love and be gentle with people.

¹² It is as though we who belong to God are running a race. When we run a race we don't stop or look back, we keep on running fast. We

haven't reached heaven yet. So keep following God until you get there, and then you will live there forever. God called you to himself to be with him forever, and at that time when he called you to himself, you told many people that you believed in him.

¹³ God has heard everything I have told you. He is the one who gives life to all things. And Jesus Christ has heard me too. He himself boldly spoke the truth about God to Pontius Pilate. So I am telling you now ¹⁴ not to disobey God but to keep on obeying him until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back again. ¹⁵ He will come back here, because God has already decided to send him. But we don't know when he will come. Only God knows. God is the only real King. He rules over all the kings in all the world. There are no kings as powerful as he is. ¹⁶ He alone cannot die, he lives forever, in light that always shines. And no one can go near him. No one has ever seen him in the past and we can't see him today. So now let us all honour him, and may he rule over us now and forever. Amen.

¹⁷ Tell rich people not to be proud, always thinking about things that become spoilt in this world. They should trust in God and nothing else. He is generous and he freely gives us everything good to make us happy. ¹⁸ Tell them to be good to others and to keep busy doing all kinds of good things. Tell them to be generous and to share their things with other people. ¹⁹ If they do that, then they will store up many good things that God will give them for later in

heaven. Because of that then God will give them real life.

²⁰⁻²¹ You must keep safe all the true things God's people believe. You must look after them so that other people won't change them. Some people say, "Only the things that we know are true." Don't listen to those people arguing or to the silly, wrong things they say. They are going the wrong way and have lost the true things that God's people believe.

I pray that God will be kind to you and to all the people who live there with you.

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