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I Timothy 1:1-2 "An Overview and Greeting"  
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All right. Let's open our Bibles this morning to I Timothy Chapter 1 verse 1.

You know, whenever we open the Bible God wants to inform us, and challenge us, and inspire us. I'm always obligated, at least in my teaching, to start a new book giving you an overview. I think it's important that you know who wrote it, why, and from where, and for what cause. If you'll bear with me this morning, I'm not going to inspire you, I'm going to inform you, and hopefully that'll be an inspiration. Just to give us an overview, looking at the first couple of verses here, and then we'll start in-depth there next week.

This book, I and II Timothy, and Titus, these next three books, are usually known as the pastoral epistles. In fact, these three along with Philemon are the only letters that Paul wrote to individuals. All of the rest of his writings are to churches at large, but these are written to individuals, to young protégés, to disciples that he had been training, and that he saw God's word taking place in their lives. As the church began to grow and spread out, as God's Word began to take hold, lots of questions began to come up in the early church about leadership and church order and soundness of faith or doctrine, discipline.

Paul writes these pastoral epistles towards the end of his life. He writes them to folks that he has been training for years. He writes them to set in order the way that the churches should go. Timothy was the pastor at Ephesus by the time he wrote this letter to him. Titus was in charge of a bunch of churches on the island of Crete. This is Paul's letter later on in life to the church leadership.

If you look at Chapter 3, verse 15, Paul will write, "If I'm delayed, I'm writing this to you that you might know how to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the

church of the living God, and it is the pillar and the ground of the truth." I think that's probably the theme, even, verse for these three books. It is all about how should the church be, what should we care about, how should we function when we meet, how should we spend our time, what should be our goals.

There's a lot to learn in the book. I think that you're going to get lots out of it. I know that I love these books, obviously, as a pastor.

The supreme joy of every parent, I think, is to see their kids turn out well. The supreme joy of everyone in ministry is to lead someone to Jesus and then see them grow. Paul is very interested in seeing these boys that he's spent a lot of time with do well in their increasing responsibilities.

When Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy, he said to him, "Timothy, the things that you've heard from me among many witnesses, take them, commit them to faithful men, that they might then go and teach others." Literally four generations: Me, what you've heard from me, what was seen in me, what you've learned, then pass them along to someone else.

I'm not sure that there's any greater disciple producer in the New Testament than Paul. He certainly loved discipleship. In I Corinthians Chapter 4 he said to the church, "You have 10,000 instructors," in other words, there's a lot of people that will tell you what to do, "but you have very few fathers in the faith." Paul really was a man who loved to teach God's Word to people, took people under his wing, turned out a lot of good disciples and elders and leader and pastors. There are lots of names in the Bible of people that he affected greatly: Dionysius, Damaris maybe you don't remember some of those names Gaius, Sopater, Tychicus, Stephanas, Clement, **Aphris**, Timothy, Titus. Go read Romans 16 or throughout I and II Corinthians where he drops a lot of names of people that he's working with. The list goes on and on. For a guy that is a few years away from death, he could look back certainly and see what his life had accomplished.

Additionally, Paul worked closely with those who received their ministry opportunity and maturity from just hanging around with Paul, guys like Barnabas, and Silas, and John

Mark, and Timothy, Titus, Apelles, Luke. For everyone that he was associated with, it does look like, when you read the Bible, that Paul really liked these two guys. I mean, he wrote them letters personally. They were the only two people, Timothy and Titus, that he called sons in the faith, true sons in the faith. You see that written in verse 2 right here about Timothy. Timothy was sent by Paul to pastor his first church. Timothy was in his early 40s. The Bible calls him a young man, if you're in your 40s, the Bible calls you a young person. I would take that to heart, because it won't last. Titus, like I said, was sent to the island of Crete to oversee several churches. But these two men seem to reflect most closely what Paul had in his heart when it came to taking care of the church and moving the church forward.

Paul would write to the Corinthians that everywhere Timothy was sent, he would bear the same witness as Paul when it came to a message. Timothy, I think, was his favorite. He would write to the Philippians, "I don't have anybody like him. Has the same heart I do, would love you the same way, would give you the same sacrifices. He doesn't seek his own way. He seeks the things of the Lord. He's a proven guy. He's a son in the Father, as a son to a father to me in the faith." He loved Timothy. Timothy was certainly his favorite.

This letter goes to his favorite, who's in his 40s, taking over his first church from a man who is in his 60s, who is about to die, or will die within the next couple of years. Timothy was his greatest joy. Both of the letters that he writes to him as well to Titus are very personal. They're very practical.

What are you going to get out of it? I hope you walk away from these books saying, well, now I know what the church should be. This is what God would want us to be. This is how he'd like us to function. This is the way things should go, and this is what the Lord would want from us. Great insight into church **instance** and church planting and all. It's a book we want to read.

We read in verse 1 the word "Paul." Paul. Paul, his name means little or small. From everything we can gather, he certainly wasn't a very good-looking guy, or a very striking figure. The folks who didn't like him, his enemies, said of him in II Corinthians Chapter 10, "Well,

his words might be weighty, but his body is weak and his speech is contemptible." They weren't impressed with his showing up. There are a lot of second century church writers who mention Paul. None of them mention him being very good looking. They say things like this: He had a bald head I don't see what the problem is with that he had crooked legs, he had a unibrow you know, the one that just keeps going over a very crooked nose. Doesn't seem too flattering.

Whatever he looked like outwardly, I don't think there was anyone that surpassed his spiritual stature, at least not in my Bible. Born into a Jewish family of the tribe of Benjamin, he had the fortunate or really the blessing of God to be born into a city, Tarsus, where they handed, the Romans did, free citizenship to all of its residents. It would serve him well. He was named after King Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, and he used the name Saul until his first missionary journey in Acts Chapter 13, when all of a sudden, for no reason, his name was changed to Paul. No explanation. It just shows up in the next verse in the Bible. We know that Paul grew up in a very traditional Jewish household, that he was given the best teaching that money could buy in Jerusalem, that he turned out to be a fanatic as far as being a Jew. In fact, in his place of power, as an act of it, he wanted very much to destroy Christianity as a whole. That was his goal. This was a threat to our very existence. We find him at the death of the church's first martyr, Stephen, approving the actions of those who killed him.

Eventually we find him meeting the Lord on a journey up to Damascus, where he had gone to arrest and to put to death other Christians. Wasn't satisfied to get them out of Jerusalem, he was satisfied to get them out of everywhere. But on that day the Lord met him, as you remember the story. In fact, Chapter 9, it was face to light, basically; right? He met the Lord and he was given eventually a calling by the Lord not to go to the Jews, but to be a witness to the Gentiles.

14 years after that, Paul really just disappears for 14 years. He is living back at home in Tarsus in obscurity when revival broke out in Antioch. Barnabas was sent there by the church to check it out. Barnabas had a gift of being an encourager, but he certainly didn't think he could pastor a church. He, feeling overwhelmed, went on, according to Acts Chapter 11, to find Paul in Tarsus and

say, hey, man, you got to come help. You know, you're the best guy for this job. People were getting saved right and left. He went, and Paul agreed to go.

We read that Paul was a good man, full of the Spirit, filled with faith. And Paul was brought there to Antioch, and for the next year the churches blossomed under Paul's leadership. From the church in Antioch Paul would spend years going out to the mission field. This was his home church. This was the place that he called home. He would go out.

In fact, Paul went on three very distinct mission trips from Antioch, taking the gospel around the world. The first one started in 46 B.C. Only lasted two years. He went primarily to Galatia. That's today modern-day Turkey. On his second trip out in 50 A.D., for six years, till 55, Paul spent most of his time in Europe. And then his third trip, which followed almost on the heels. He wasn't even home six months. He left in 55 and came back in 57 A.D. He went primarily to Ephesus, where Timothy is now pastoring the church. And then he went to Greece.

Slowly made his way, not home to Antioch, but to Jerusalem, where he would in 57 A.D. be arrested. They would put him in prison, take him down to Caesarea, and for two years he was just left there to rot. Supposed to have a hearing. Hadn't done anything wrong except preach. But week after month after year passed, and nothing took place. And finally, using his Roman citizenship, he demanded to have a hearing in Rome before Cesar, happened to be Nero, and they finally had to kind of go, all right. You know, they were worried about how they looked having held him for so long, but Paul got what he wanted. They put him on a ship in September of 59 A.D. You might remember the story, that they both got shipwrecked in Malta. Paul would stay on that island for three months.

He finally arrived in Rome in February of 60 A.D. He lived in his own rented house, under house arrest. He was able to take friends in and family, visitors, but he was locked up. In fact, for two years he was ignored again. And there he sat in the house. You think you've been in quarantine for a while, this is four years now. While he was under house arrest waiting his trial in Rome, Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, the Philippian

letter, the Colossian letter, the Philemon letter; all letters that came from his first captivity, as they're called.

At some point he had a hearing before Nero, and he was acquitted. They let him out of jail. For the next year and a half he spent we don't know where. We do know that he visited some of the churches because he makes mention of it. We do know that he wrote I Timothy and Titus during that freedom time. And then 18 months later he was arrested by Nero again. Nero blamed the Christians for burning down Rome. He had done it himself. And Paul was placed in the Mamartine prison and then beheaded. Right before he was beheaded, he wrote one last letter to Timothy, which you have in your Bibles known as II Timothy. In 65 A.D., Paul would write his last letter.

This is the Paul. Paul's at the end of his life, you know. He's in that 18-month period where he's going to be rearrested and murdered. He's probably in his late 60s; Timothy in his early 40s. Paul writes this letter from verse 2. Timothy is the recipient. He writes it to his favorite disciple.

Timothy means "one who honors the Lord." We learn from the Bible that Timothy was raised by a believing mother, Eunice, and a grandmother named Lois, and that his father was a Greek. He was an unbeliever. His mother was a Jew. And that he lived in a place called Lystra. When Paul went out on his first missionary journey, Paul went to Lystra. It would seem probable that Timothy, his mother, and grandmother heard the gospel from Paul. Being good Jews, to whom Paul always went first because he had something in common, they very well could have received the Lord during that time of Paul's visit. Timothy would have been in his early teens; maybe 13, 14, years old.

If you remember from the book of Acts, in the ministry at Lystra there was a man who was lame, and as Paul was preaching the Lord encouraged him to reach out to this man, and the Lord healed him, and the man began to walk in the midst of all of the people, and the people freaked out. They had heard the gospel. This had to be some divine act. They gathered together and they said, Well, this is Hermes, and this is Zeus. And they began to bring offerings to offer to Paul and Barnabas, and Paul and Barnabas said, "Don't do that. There's just one God.

He's the One we're preaching to you." But instead of stopping the people from worship, he just angered them, embarrassed them. And they got in a gang together and they grabbed Paul and they dragged him out of town and they stoned him and left him for dead. He didn't die. Got up, went back into town, took a break, and then left. No doubt Timothy watched all of this as a kid. It was a small town. Everyone would have been aware of it.

When Paul came back on his second journey through the towns four or five years later, he came to Lystra, and he said to Timothy, "Would you like to join me in ministry?" Paul had lost John Mark, you might remember, on the first trip. He needed some help. A young guy would have been greatly helpful. But Timothy was a man that we read in the book of Acts had already a great reputation for loving the Lord in town. Timothy had to make a decision. If you remember the stoning, he might have gone, "I'm not joining with you. You get killed in places." No, it never slowed him down. He was faithful, and from that day on all you see is Timothy with Paul.

When Paul decided to take Timothy, he said, "Because your dad was Greek and you weren't circumcised, you probably ought to go get circumcised. The Jews will require it. They won't hear you otherwise." And he even agreed to that, which that was a big step for this young guy. But needless to say, he becomes Paul's kind of disciple, and his favorite one at that. He's mentioned in seven of the letters that Paul writes to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, Thessalonian letters, Philemon letters, as well as obviously his own.

Paul used Timothy to go fix trouble. He went to Corinth, he went to Thessalonica, he went to Philippi. And like I said, by the time this letter was written by Paul, Timothy is the pastor, his first job as a pastor in Ephesus.

Timothy was absolutely unlike Paul, yet he was in close association with him. Sent to this Ephesian church in his 40s, Timothy was extremely nervous and timid and reserved to be able to take this on. If you think you can only minister with people that are like you, Timothy and Paul would show you otherwise. Aside from loving Jesus and totally being committed to God's people, these guys had absolutely nothing in common. Paul was loud and

in your face and always ready for a fight. He was a classic real "A" personality. Timothy, shy, quiet, withdrawn, easily intimidated. It was just the opposite. When Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians because he was sending Timothy there, he wrote at the end of I Corinthians, Look, if Timothy comes to you, be sure that he can stay with you without being afraid. He was trying to prep the church, don't scare this guy. And yet he's the one that the Lord would use.

When he wrote his last letter to Timothy before he was killed, Paul said in I Timothy 5:23, "Hey, drink a little wine for your frequent stomachaches." This guy was a worrywart. He wasn't good at handling pressure. He didn't run to the fight. He stepped away from them. He's not exactly your missionary commando. But that makes the point that God can use anyone if you're willing to be used and available to Him.

This is a letter from Paul, the aged warrior, who spent so many years, to a young man in his 40s to instruct him not to be so passive and retiring and easily intimidated. He'd been 20 years of his life, half of his life, on the road with Paul, and yet the very thought of this job still unnerved him completely. This was as hard as it could get. In fact, Paul will again and again in these letters encourage him to stir up the gifts, and, "We laid hands on you, man. The Lord spoke to you. You know what God's calling is."

And Ephesus was not exactly the easiest place to minister, because the biggest problem in Ephesus was false teachers had gotten onto the board of directors and in the pulpit, and they were leading tons of people astray, and Paul needed someone to go and say enough is enough. We're going to reorganize. We're going to make this right. Which would have been easy for Paul probably, but I suspect it would have scared the pants off of Timothy. And yet this is who God sent.

The letter was written 63, 64 A.D., somewhere in that period. Look at verse 1, Paul says, "I am Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope."

The term "apostle" in the Bible is used in two different senses. In a general sense it speaks of service. In a very specific sense it speaks of office, an office that



you would hold. The word itself means to be sent out, to be sent forth, to be an ambassador, if you will, or an envoy. In that general sense there's a lot of apostles in the Bible; far more than the 12 you would immediately call to mind. Barnabas was an apostle, Epaphroditus was an apostle, Andronicus was an apostle. You might not even remember his name. Junias was an apostle. James, the Lord's brother, was an apostle. In very broad terms, you know, they were messengers of the churches of the Lord, they are called apostles. In a general sense, those who are sent forth or carry forth the word, those are apostles.

In a very limited sense, or in a more restrictive sense, there are 12 apostles that Jesus chose. You remember them. After a night of prayer, Luke Chapter 6, crying out to the Father, Who do I pick? Jesus picked the most unlikely of people. I mean, you go look at their qualification, you shake your head. But they're apostles. And in that sense, there were only 12. Eventually Judas was set aside, the one who betrayed the Lord, and there was one to be replaced. The church tried to replace Judas, you might remember early on in the book of Acts, by a guy that they chose and yet you never hear from again. It does seem that since the Lord picked all 12 apostles, probably not the church's job to pick the 12th one as a replacement. The Lord I think had his hand always obviously on Paul. Paul felt as strongly about that as well.

There was some qualifications to be an apostle, the strict sense, office of an apostle. They had to learn the gospel from the Lord firsthand. They had to be witnesses of His words and deeds and of His resurrection.

Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. The Lord would appear to Paul three different times after that. Paul would write that he never learned the gospel from anyone else, that he learned it personally from the Lord.

In that official sense, the apostles were important because they'll show up in the book of Revelation as the foundations for the new Jerusalem.

In an official sense, these disciples and their teachings and their instructions were important because it was what they said and what the Lord said through them that established what the church believed. Early on in the

book of Acts, when the church begins to meet together, you will read things like they gathered steadfastly in the apostle's doctrines. Paul and the others brought forth the teaching that God wanted the church to have.

That they would be credible, you will also read in the New Testament of a power in the life of the apostles that was very unique. For example, when Peter had a couple of folks run into church, Ananias and Sapphira, pretending to be something they weren't, Peter in the authority that the Lord gave him declared that they would die in the church, drop dead at the door, and they did. And people said, whoa, we better not mess around with these apostles. It gave them credibility. Doesn't mean that God didn't work mightily, miraculously through others, but he certainly established their office with great power. In fact, you will read that in II Corinthians 12, that the signs of the apostles were accomplished with much perseverance, signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

Paul was one of those. One of those apostles by commandment of God, if you will. But his teaching and his instruction became the bedrock of the church. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he said, "We are being built on the foundations of the apostles and of the prophets." So very unique calling. There were only 12. But they had a special place in the early development of the church.

But now Paul calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ, and then he writes these words, "by the commandment of God." If you read and have you read the Bible, you know that Paul usually says that he was an apostle by the will of God. This is what God wants for me; right? And we've asked a couple of times going through, what is God's will for your life? Paul usually points out that it is the will of God, but here he uses the word for divine command or mandate. I think he does so because Paul realized that he was an apostle because God demanded he be one. And his point is, Timothy, God now demands you to be a pastor there, and to accomplish His work. It's the will of God to all, but to the hesitant it's the command of God.

And I think that can be sometimes. The Lord calls you to do something, you go, I'm not fit for that. I'm not ready for that. Yeah, but that's what God wants you to do. It's a command of God. Well, I'm not I can't do it. Who says? Well, I say. But the Lord says go do it.

Don't get yourself off the hook too quickly. Timothy couldn't get off the hook, and Paul understood his hesitancy, you know, his temerity, he says, look, I'm an apostle by the command of God. This was God's command upon my life. He's God our savior. He's the Lord Jesus Christ. It just says, you know, God our Savior points to the deity of Christ, in you the hope of glory.

I read some time ago somebody said Christianity is a religion of personal pronouns, and I liked that, because it is all about our relationship with God through His Son.

That's Paul. He writes to Timothy. He describes him in verse 2 as a true son in the faith. In other words, Paul believed Timothy was a true believer, as opposed to several folks in this church that he's going to be pastoring that had kind of dropped out of sight or had done some things that brought their faith into question or proved their faith to be less than genuine. Paul will bring up a guy named Demas, who'd hung around with Paul for a long time. Went to ministry stuff, reached out, went to churches with him, traveled with him, and then he went south and he kind of dropped off the map. Paul wasn't I won't say he was surprised by it, but he pointed out this guy's just flaking out. I don't know what to think of him. You know, we have to be careful about him. But Paul was sure about Timothy. He called him a true son in the faith, like Titus. Timothy had over 25 years probably been saved, and Paul had watched him closely, and he was proven, and Paul thought he could handle the challenges here in Ephesus. He had saving faith. His life had been changed.

Early on in Lystra, he had been walking with God ever since, and now he had to go deal with false teachers, false prophets, you know, root out of a church these guys that had entrenched themselves. On an outward sense you would say to yourself, well, this isn't the guy to do it, but Paul will say to him time and again, it is your time to do this. You've got to contend for the faith. You've got to go stand for the truth of God. His job would be tough, but if you have genuine salvation, you'll make it. Nobody's going to turn you away, even the opposition in places like Ephesus.

Paul, I think it says a lot for him to call him a true son in the faith. This guy can be relied upon. And I

thought about that, because you and I as Christians, the best way we can affect our world beside just our word is by our life, and true people of faith are characterized by consistent obedience to the Lord; not once in a while, not a word or two. I mean, one of the hallmarks of the believers, Jesus said in John 14 verse 15, "If you love me, you're going to keep my commandments." Certainly, one of the ways we do the best at being a witness to the word is walking with God in our obedience to the Lord.

Timothy's life as a Christian would stand in stark contrast to a lot of these folks in Ephesus that weren't doing well. Paul will mention in verse 19 and 20 of this chapter Hymenaeus and Alexander. He said, "I've delivered them to Satan so they might learn not to blaspheme." There were some pretty wicked guys in this church. The church was not a place you'd probably want to hang out as a Christian. But it had to be addressed, Paul sends Timothy, a true son in the faith. He'll show him the difference. Paul will say in Chapter 5 of this first letter there's some young widows in the church that had been taken aside to the devil's ways by these men. You got to get in there, man. There's lives to be touched. And Timothy would bless them by his example.

Paul will mention of Timothy that he served humbly, and it certainly would apply to us, I think. We want to have people see Jesus in you. A true child in the faith is humble.

Timothy would be an example of the Lord, despite all of the difficulties. There were a lot of people in Ephesus, and we will read about them even in the first chapter, verse 6, verse 7, verse 8, who were there just to get notoriety. They wanted people to know them, to follow them, to support them. They were all about titles and recognition. And Paul will say to Timothy, go be an example of the believer in your love, in your speech, in your behavior. Show them the difference. You want people to see Jesus in you, show them the difference. Walk with God openly and it'll confront and challenge those who say they love the Lord but don't.

Consistent obedience, humble service. Thirdly, Timothy was really well-versed in the scriptures. Paul will say to him several places in this letter, Hey, Timothy, when the church gets together, teach the Bible. Teach the

word. Share the word. Impart the word regularly.

One of the problems for Ephesus was they were plagued by false teachers. I mean, a lot of them. And Paul wanted Timothy to take them back to the scriptures. He would write at the end of Chapter 4, "Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them, That your progress can be evidence to all. And take heed to yourself and to your doctrine. Continue in them, for in so doing you'll save yourself and you'll save those that hear you." One of Timothy's jobs was go teach the Bible.

I hope that we do that here. I don't think you'll hear many political speeches here, because I really don't care about them. I want you to come and hear about the Lord, worship God. That's why we're here. What you determine beyond that is up to you. But I want to be sure when you come here, you're leaving going, "This is what the Bible says. This is what the Lord would say."

Timothy was committed to the sound doctrine, he was consistently obedient, he was humble in his service, he was committed to God's Word, and he was a courageous guy. As retiring as he was, he didn't quit.

Pastor Chuck used to say to us in ministry school, "Any dead fish can swim downstream." But if you're going to stand up for Jesus, you're going to have to put your back into it. And Timothy will be told that by Paul, to guard the trust, to fight for what was right.

Chapter 3 will in the first seven verses be filled with directions on what kind of elders to choose, what kind of personality traits and character traits should he be looking for as he replaces these guys that were just ripping the church off.

It's a pretty good book. If you're ever unsure of yourself or, you know, you think you're retiring, I think this book will encourage you to not be so.

Well, let me end with this before we get to just the salutation: Church history tells us, and it's not in your Bible, but there's plenty of evidence in church history that 30 years after Timothy got this letter, he was murdered by an angry mob in Ephesus for offending the worship of the goddess Diana. No reason to doubt it. It makes perfect sense biblically. But it is in your Bible,

I'm just telling you can find it for yourself. But it seems like he finished well; right? He held fast his confidence, steadfast at the end.

Well, Paul ends his little introduction before getting into it in verse 2 by blessing Timothy, this little benediction, "Grace and mercy and peace from God our Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord." The threefold blessing. If you've read a lot of Paul's writings, you know that most of the time you will read grace and peace. In these three letters Paul adds the word "mercy." The word "mercy" by definition means not getting what you deserve. If grace is getting what you don't deserve, mercy is not getting what you do deserve. Timothy, I think, needed to hear from Paul and from the Lord that there was going to be a lot of grace that was going to have to be extended to these folks; not to get even with them, but to show mercy to them, because he was going to have to deal with a lot of volatile situations.

Grace gives you what you don't deserve; as a result you have peace with God and the peace of God, and then there's mercy. Aren't you glad you're not getting what you deserve? That would be called justice. You don't want justice, you want mercy.

Next week we'll go down to verse 11. We'll get into it and start with Paul. Thank you for bearing with this long-winded overview.