

Acts 2: Lesson Three, Paul's Pastoral Epistles

1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus

Subject: Paul wrote to pastors Timothy and Titus near the end of his life.

Main Idea: When we have eternity in view, all that matters on earth are people and the word of God.

Principles:

1. *It is the Christian's duty to know and defend the sound doctrines of the Scriptures.*
2. *Investing in people pays lasting dividends.*
3. *The eternal is all that will matter at the end of our lives.*

Introduction

Perhaps you are familiar with the phrase, “the tyranny of the urgent.” The idea is that we often allow ourselves to be driven through life by things that seem urgent but are not truly important. What kinds of things have been especially on your mind today? Are they truly significant things, things of eternal consequence, or are they merely perceived emergencies? In the introduction to the Acts 2 study, we learned that the books contained in the last half of our New Testaments were almost certainly written late in their authors’ lives, at a time when eternity was especially on their minds, a time when they were preparing to once again see Jesus face to face. What mattered to them were things that were truly important.

When Paul wrote his “prison epistles” from house arrest in AD 60-62, he anticipated release (Philemon 22). Apparently he was released, because his letters to Timothy and Titus mention his involvement in further missionary endeavors. The book of Acts records only three missionary journeys that Paul made. These late-life travels seemed to have comprised a fourth journey. No historical record exists, but Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus indicate that he visited Philippi (Macedonia), Ephesus, Crete, and Corinth. Since it had been his stated desire to go to Spain (Romans 15:24, 28), he may have gone there as well.

Since Timothy and Titus were pastors, Paul’s three letters to them are known as “pastoral” epistles. The letters indicate that Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) and Titus in Crete (Titus 1:5). False teachers were undermining the truths of the gospel in these locations. Timothy and Titus had faithfully served alongside Paul for many years and he trusted them as capable defenders of the faith. In addition to correcting false teaching, Paul charged them with modeling a Christian lifestyle, and with identifying and commissioning sound leaders over their respective congregations. When Paul wrote Timothy and Titus, he was already an old man (Philemon 9) but still traveling. By the time he penned a second letter to Timothy, he had been re-imprisoned and knew his life was almost over.

What was on Paul’s mind at his life’s end? His final three letters indicate that it was people and the word of God: people to whom he would pass the torch of the faith, people who would lead and teach believers, people who needed to be evangelized, and the accurate transmission of the gospel message from one generation to another. I find this interesting because in the Exodus study, we found that Moses also invested his life in God’s word and in people. When we have eternity in view, these are the things on earth that matter most.

I. 1 Timothy

A. Introduction

- i. Timothy's Identity: Paul met Timothy in Timothy's hometown of Lystra on his second missionary journey. Although Timothy's father was a Greek, he had a rich heritage in the faith through his Jewish mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). Local believers spoke well of him. The decision was made for Timothy to join Paul's ministry team, and for the sake of the Jews in that region (individuals Paul hoped to win for Christ), he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy often traveled with Paul thereafter. Paul both mentored and relied on him.
- ii. The Ephesian Congregation: In our last lesson, we recalled that Paul taught in Ephesus for three years on his third missionary journey, lecturing daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, with the effect that all who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord (19:10). Paul warned the Ephesian elders to expect false teaching to creep into the church (Acts 20:28-31) and when he and Timothy returned, late in Paul's life (sometime between 62-67 AD), these false teachings had developed (1 Timothy 1:3).
- iii. Purpose: 1 Timothy is a church leadership manual (3:15) that includes instructions about dealing with false teaching, setting up capable church leadership, and giving instructions to the people of God's household, as well as an example of how to conduct themselves.

B. False Teachers in Ephesus – 1 Timothy 1

- i. The False Teachers: The primary reason Paul left Timothy in Ephesus was to deal with people teaching false doctrine (1:3-4). Some older translations speak of promoters of these false teachings as "men" (rather than "people"), but the Greek uses an indefinite pronoun, leaving the possibility that they were women. According to verse 7, they wanted to be teachers but hadn't been properly trained.
- ii. Their Teaching: Verses 8-11 suggest these individuals promoted a legalistic observation of the Mosaic Law. 2:7 indicates that they challenged Paul's apostolic authority and according to 6:5 and 6:10, the true motive of their "godliness" was financial gain.
- iii. Emphasis on Sound Doctrine: In 1:10, Paul uses the phrase "sound doctrine" for the first of five times in the books of Timothy and Titus (1 Timothy 1:10, 6:3; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9, 2:1). The phrase "this is a trustworthy saying" also appears five times in these books (1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8). Paul considered protecting the truth of God's word tremendously important.

C. Instructions About Worship – 1 Timothy 2-3: Chapters 2 and 3 contain instructions about worship and church leadership.

- i. Prayer: Prayer is listed as a matter of necessity and priority in public worship. Paul specifically urged prayer for governing authorities and for the salvation of “all people” (2:4 [perhaps the church in Ephesus had become exclusive, focusing solely on the elite rather than winning “all people” to Christ]).
- ii. Women and Their Roles: Immediately after (or perhaps even in the context of) prayer, Paul addressed the modesty and role of women. Quite likely, he mentioned these issues ahead of other important church matters because they had become a problem in this congregation. Modesty was an issue and the women’s teaching was an issue.
 1. *Modesty* – 2:9-10: Some of the Ephesian women apparently placed too much emphasis on glamour, trying to draw attention to themselves. Paul talks about men everywhere praying in the previous verse, some suggest that this verse on a woman’s modesty was related. In other words, he may have been saying, “I want the men everywhere to pray (2:8)... Also [when women pray they are to] dress modestly (2:9).” The possibility that some women were using public prayer as a platform to draw attention to themselves is consistent with what Paul had to say about their teaching.
 2. *Women Teaching and Having Church Authority* – 2:11-15
 - a. *Positive Command*: On a positive note, Paul taught the importance of educating women. The passage begins, “A woman should learn...” (2:11). Teaching women was countercultural. At that time, women did not have the right to be educated as men did.ⁱ Paul said the women were to learn in quietness (“hēsychia,” a word that is also used in verse 12, where it is sometimes translated “silence” [although the word does not necessarily imply not talking]). They are also to learn in “full submission” (meaning submission to God, or perhaps to their teacher).
 - b. *Negative Commands*: There is also a negative command. Verse 12 says, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be ‘hēsychia’.” Paul said something similar to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 14:34). Paul’s reasons are the order of creation and a woman’s vulnerability to deception. Not surprisingly, these passages have led to controversy, especially since women are portrayed in leadership roles elsewhere in the New Testament (Roman’s 16:1-4, 7; Philippians 4:2-3).

- i. What conclusions can we draw? First, Paul was addressing public worship services, not other occasions of worship. Second, Paul was addressing the problem of women teaching men, not women teaching in general.
- ii. The question that remains is whether Paul was saying that no woman should ever teach in public worship services at any time because of the presence of men. Two views are considered:
 1. *A Universal Command*: Some believe Paul gave a universal command that women should never teach men. However, in light of the context, most people who take this view agree that it is unreasonable to press such a regulation beyond the forum of public worshipⁱⁱ or beyond the authority of the elders of a congregation.ⁱⁱⁱ
 2. *A Command to Address a Local Situation*: Many have concluded that Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy and in 1 Corinthians about women not teaching (or speaking) in public worship services were intended to address two particular congregations, at a particular point in time, and for a particular reason. It may have primarily been the Ephesian women who were promoting the false teaching Paul wrote about, or at the very least, they might have been the ones most influenced by it.^{iv} Since at the time, women were generally less educated than the men, they could have been deceived much more easily. Thus, Paul says they must learn (2:11). If the women were loudly and aggressively promoting these false teachings, to the point of dominating their male counterparts, Paul's exhortations to stop teaching and demanding authority, but to learn quietly, would make all the more sense. In Ephesians 5, Paul taught that all believers are to submit to one another (5:21). The equality that belonged to all those in Christ was so unlike the male domination of the culture that Christian women may have tasted a good thing and allowed it to get out of hand.^{v, vi, vii, viii}

- iii. Qualifications of Elders and Deacons: Since Paul was concerned about long-term protection of the gospel and the church, he carefully listed qualities Timothy was to look for in seeking sound leadership. Good leaders would help protect the church from false teaching.
 1. Paul said that an elder (church overseer) is to be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He is to have a well-managed family and be obeyed and respected by his children. He should not be a recent convert and must have a good reputation with those outside the church.
 2. Deacons (church helpers) are to be worthy of respect, sincere, and not given to indulging in drinking or pursuing dishonest gain. They must hold to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience and be tested to ensure “there is nothing against them.” They are to be the husband of but one wife, have a well-managed household, and wives who are not malicious talkers but are respectable, temperate, and trustworthy.

D. Miscellaneous Pastoral Instructions – 1 Timothy 4-6

- i. Errors of Asceticism and Legalism – 4:1-10: Paul affirmed that in the last days, some will abandon the faith to follow false teaching promoted by demons. Examples that apparently existed in the Ephesian congregation included asceticism and legalism (4:1-5). Timothy was exhorted to reject godless myths and old wives’ tales, train himself to be godly (4:7), and point out the errors that were being promoted to the congregation (4:6).
- ii. Obligation in Instruction and Example – 4:11-16, 6:11-21: Paul exhorted Timothy to watch his life and his doctrine closely (4:16). With regard to doctrine, Timothy was to “command and teach,” regardless of his youth. With regard to his life, Timothy was to set an example for his congregation.
- iii. Respecting Others – 5:1-6:2: Paul loved Christ’s church. Knowing God’s people carry Christ’s reputation, he commanded them to show one another love and respect. Younger believers should show special respect to those who are older, widows’ families should care for them, the church should care for widows without family, and the elders’ reputations were to be defended and their needs met. Believing masters and slaves were to show mutual respect.
- iv. Error in Prioritizing Financial Gain over Godliness – 6:3-10: The promoters of false teachings apparently profited from it financially. Paul reminded Timothy that loving money is the root of all kinds of evil.

- v. Final Charge to Timothy – 6:11-21: Paul concluded by charging Timothy to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness, to “fight the good fight of the faith,” and to guard what had been entrusted to his care.

Summary Statement: Paul wrote to embolden Timothy in handling false doctrines in the Ephesian church and to charge him with establishing leadership that would protect the interests of the gospel and to set a good personal example.

When Paul wrote his prison epistle to the Ephesians, he deemed the congregation mature enough for some of his richest doctrinal teaching. Yet just a few years later, these people had fallen prey to false teaching. Every Christian and every congregation needs to defend the truth of the Scriptures and beware of false teaching.

Principle: *It is the Christian’s duty to know and defend the sound doctrine of the Scriptures.*

Christians in western countries have never been more confused than they are today about the Bible’s teaching on homosexuality. When we seek to understand the Bible in light of our culture rather than trying to understand our culture in light of the Bible, confusion and error are bound to follow. We need to spend our entire lives saturating our minds with the Scriptures so that we recognize false teaching when we hear it. We should never assume we are too mature to fall into error. And since we have an obligation to pass the torch of the faith, we must also ensure that the Scriptures are known and properly understood by the next generation.

Application: Would the people you know say you are passionate about God’s truth? Of course, as Paul reminded Timothy, love is the goal of challenging false ideas (1 Timothy 1:5). We must be gentle in our correction (2 Timothy 2:25). How can we expect our children and grandchildren, the people in our small groups, the younger people in our churches, and the individuals we lead to Christ to know and defend the Gospel in our hostile culture if we do not know it well enough to defend it ourselves?

Paul was eager to impress the importance of defending the sound doctrine of the scriptures on Timothy, so that the Ephesian church wouldn’t shift from the truth and forfeit the power of the gospel. Churches all over America today are bending and shifting from God’s truth. As a result, their influence on society has markedly waned.

Transition: Titus had a similar problem in Crete. Because of the many similarities between 1 Timothy and Titus, and the fact that both letters were written before 2 Timothy, we are covering Titus next and 2 Timothy last in this lesson.

II. Titus

A. Introduction

- i. Titus' Identity: Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile, was probably led to the Lord by Paul (Titus 1:4) and became one of Paul's most trusted companions. Early in Paul's ministry, he brought Titus to Jerusalem as a "test case" regarding the question of Gentiles' inclusion in Christ (Galatians 2:1-3).
- ii. Comparison to 1 Timothy: Sometime during the years in which Paul left Timothy in Ephesus, he left Titus in Crete with a similar mission. Crete is the largest of the Greek islands, 170 miles south of Athens, and at that time, it had a reputation for being especially immoral. In fact, "to act the Cretan" was an expression that meant, "to play the liar"^{ix} (Titus 1:10-14). Both Timothy and Titus had heresies to deal with in their congregations and both were tasked with appointing leadership. As already noted, the phrases "sound doctrine" and "this is a trustworthy saying" are repeated in both.
- iii. Content of the Letter: Like many of Paul's letters, Titus is part doctrinal and part practical. In Titus, there is one important doctrinal passage in each of the three chapters and the remainder of the letter is practical.

B. Titus 1-3

- i. Qualifications for leaders – 1:5-9: Paul knew that the church in Crete, like the one in Ephesus, needed godly leaders to "encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (1:9). He laid out qualities church leaders must possess, including the ability to defend sound doctrine and character that is beyond reproach.
- ii. False doctrines – 1:10-2:1: Clues in Titus 1 indicate that the false teachings Titus had to deal with were the same as those Timothy battled in Ephesus: legalism and antinomianism.
 1. *Legalism*: In 1:10, Paul names the circumcision group as especially guilty of opposing the sound doctrine of the gospel in Crete. These were Jews who taught that faith in Christ was not sufficient for salvation but that salvation also required conversion to Judaism (evidenced by circumcision). They did not reject Christ; they just did not see His work alone as sufficient for salvation. They taught that salvation came through Christ *plus works*.

2. *Antinomianism*: Paul also mentioned the Cretans' reputation for immorality. If the Cretan believers had concluded that because of God's grace, they could behave without any moral restraints, then while on the one hand, they added works to salvation, on the other hand, they conveniently dismissed the need for good works when it interfered with their lifestyle. Paul told Titus, "Rebuke them sharply, so they will be sound in the faith... You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (1:13; 2:1).
- iii. Specific Instructions to Men, Women, and Slaves – 2:2-10: The purpose of increasing our knowledge of Bible truths isn't primarily intellectual but practical. Sound doctrine should impact our daily choices. While Paul's instructions to specific age groups in 1 Timothy focused on showing respect, his instructions to those in Crete emphasize righteous behavior. According to Paul, our primary motivation for righteousness is our anticipation of Jesus' return. Christ redeemed us from impure and worldly ways (2:11-14).
 1. Older men should be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Older women should be reverent in the way they live, not slanderers or addicted to wine, but teaching what is good and training younger women.
 2. Younger women are to love their husbands and children, be self-controlled and pure, busy at home, kind, and subject to their husbands. Young men are to be self-controlled. As a role model to them, Titus was to show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech.
 3. Slaves were to be subject to their masters and not talk back to them or steal from them but be fully trustworthy so that their faith would be attractive to their masters.
- iv. Final instructions – 3:1-15
 1. Paul's final instructions are for God's people to be subject to the authorities, obedient, not slanderers but peaceable, considerate, and humble (3:1-2). Again, Paul's reason is that we have been saved from foolish, disobedient, deceptive ways and from indulging in passionate pleasures so that we might be heirs of eternal life and devoted to doing good (3:3-8).
 2. In chapter 1, Paul suggests the Cretans had been caught up in meaningless talk (1:10) and myths (1:14) and at the end of the letter, he once again mentions the need to avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, and arguments and quarrels about the law (3:9), saying these are unprofitable and useless (3:9).

3. In Paul's closing words, he seems to suggest that the Cretans had not been living productive lives (3:14). Their culture encouraged foolish self-indulgence (1:12) and sadly, they had been influenced by it. Paul admonished them to instead invest their time and efforts in helping two church leaders (Zenas and Apollos), who would be traveling their way.

Summary Statement: Although the churches at Ephesus and Crete undoubtedly read Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, it is noteworthy that all three of his last letters were addressed to individuals he was mentoring. Paul was passionate about building into people and encouraged others to do the same.

Principle: *Investing in people pays lasting dividends.*

Countless "nobodies" have become people of influence because one individual invested in their lives. The value of your influence may be inestimable. A younger individual in your circle of acquaintances may be the next world evangelist or persuasive political figure.

Just as Paul invested in Timothy and Titus, these pastors were to invest in the congregations they served.

Application: In whom are you investing? Who will carry the torch of your faith when you are no longer on earth? Who will carry on your ministry in the church and the community? Do you view yourself as irreplaceable, gripping tightly to your position, or are you always in the process of passing your skills and experiences on to others?

Investing in others is costly; it requires time, energy, and sometimes money. But it is often rewarded in this life and God promises a heavenly reward (Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:24). Are we willing to pay the cost now for a future payout?

Transition: 2 Timothy is the last of Paul's preserved letters.

III. 2 Timothy

A. Introduction

- i. Nero and Paul's Arrest: The Roman Emperor Nero (55-68 AD) is infamously suspected of having started the "Great Fire" that destroyed Rome in AD 64. He blamed Christians and arrested many of them in Rome. He reportedly then dressed some of them in animals' skins and allowed his hounds to hunt them in his royal garden at night for the entertainment of Roman audiences. "The scene was floodlit by other Christians who were burned as human torches."^x Nero's violence resulted in sympathy for Christians among some Romans, but it also set a legal precedent for widespread hatred of Christians and gave Paul's enemies justification for having him re-arrested. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy (perhaps early in 67 AD), he was back in chains (1:16, 2:9) and confident that his life on earth was nearly over (4:6).
- ii. Timothy's Location: It is presumed that Timothy was still in Ephesus. At the end of the letter, Paul warned Timothy to beware of the metalworker Alexander, an Ephesian who had formerly caused Paul much trouble (2 Timothy 4:14, Acts 19:33).
- iii. Purpose of the Letter: 2 Timothy is a very personal letter. Paul wrote asking Timothy to come quickly so he could see him one final time, and to bring Mark, as well as Paul's "scrolls" and cloak. The need to deal with false teaching is again addressed. Paul also briefly mentioned the last days. Most importantly, knowing his own life was at an end, Paul urged Timothy to faithful perseverance as a servant of Christ. Paul had eternity on his mind; he was passing, to Timothy and others, the responsibility for sharing the gospel.

B. Perseverance in the Faith – 2 Timothy 1

- i. Timothy's Stamina in Service – 1:6-8: Paul thanked God for Timothy's sincere faith and urged him to fan into flame the spiritual gift he had been given. This is a useful picture for every believer, reminding us that although the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts, we are expected to cultivate them. Paul urged Timothy to join him in suffering for the gospel. No loving parent or friend enjoys seeing his or her beloved suffer, but Paul considered suffering for the advancement of the gospel so necessary that he actually urged his young protégé to join him in it. Paul did this because his perspective was eternal.
- ii. The Mission: 1:9-14: Paul wrote that while God guards our salvation and eternal inheritance, He entrusts *us* with guarding the gospel, a trust Paul was passing to Timothy: "What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching" (1:13).

- iii. Examples of Faithfulness and Unfaithfulness: Paul named two individuals who had not been faithful to their trust and had deserted Paul. He then blessed Onesiphorus and his household for doggedly tracking him down in Rome and refreshing him.

C. Entrusting Sound Doctrine to Others – 2 Timothy 2

- i. Committed to the Cause of the Gospel: Just as Paul was passing a trust to Timothy, he encouraged Timothy to pass that trust (the gospel truths) to other reliable people who were qualified to teach. This was a big task that required that Timothy “be strong” (2:1).
- ii. Analogies of Effective Stewards – 2:5-13: Paul gave Timothy three illustrations of effective stewardship and exhorted him to ponder these in his service to the Lord and His gospel.
 1. *A Good Soldier*: A good soldier sets aside personal interests in order to stay focused on his mission. Timothy would have to endure hardship and be willing to suffer in order to fully commit himself to the cause of Jesus Christ in the world.
 2. *An Athlete*: Just as athletes must learn and practice the disciplines (the rules) that enable success, faithful servants of the Lord must learn and practice spiritual disciplines so we don’t lose stamina and fail to accomplish our goal. The Lord will reward those who endure hardships in order to keep their spiritual commitment.
 3. *A Farmer*: Paul’s mention of reward made him think of a hardworking farmer being the first to receive a share of his crops.

The main point of these illustrations is that striving at any enterprise requires hard work and self-discipline. Paul had been faithful to this calling and wanted Timothy to remain faithful as well. The goal is that others might obtain salvation (2:10-13). Paul concluded his admonition with one of his “trustworthy statements” that emphasizes the reward for those who die to self and faithfully endure hardship.
- iii. Sound Teaching and False Teaching – 2:14-26
 1. The remainder of chapter 2 emphasizes the importance of doctrinal soundness. Paul named two false teachers who said the resurrection of the dead had already occurred. As a worker who could correctly instruct others in the truth handed down to him, Timothy was told to continually remind and warn his congregation about the danger of heresy. His solid teaching was to stand in sharp contrast to the gangrene of the heretic’s teaching.

2. Timothy was also told to keep his behavior pure and refuse to get involved in foolish arguments. Perhaps Paul's advice reflects one commonly given to parents: "Choose your battles." Paul warned Timothy against involving himself in every little disagreement, but when the doctrines of the Scriptures were at stake, he was obligated to defend them. Quarreling over words wouldn't help. Rather, Timothy was to gently correct those he instructed, without resentment but kind-heartedly and with a genuine desire to help those who had been misled.

D. Final Warning and Charge to Timothy – 2 Timothy 3-4

- i. The Last Days – 3:1-5: Paul said that the "last days" would be a time of gross immorality. The "last days" are the entire period between Christ's ascension and His return, although Paul seems to have had the time that immediately precedes Christ's return in mind. In this period, people will not tolerate sound doctrine but oppose truth and choose teachers who say what they want to hear. They will have a "form of godliness" (religiosity), "but deny its power" (have no intention of putting their professed beliefs into practice).
- ii. The Victims of False Teaching – 3:6-9: Paul indicated that the victims of the false teaching in Ephesus had primarily been some of the women in the congregation, those who were "dominated by curiosity, novelty, and self-centeredness."^{xi} This statement supports the theory that in 1 Timothy, it was a particular group of women in the Ephesian church who Paul exhorted not to lead or teach until they were properly instructed themselves (1 Timothy 2:11-15).
- iii. Paul's Charge to Timothy – 3:10-4:8
 1. *Paul's Example and the Nature of the Charge*: Since Timothy was familiar with Paul's teaching, way of life, and motives, Paul charged him with following his example and faithfully preaching the word after Paul departed (4:6). Here again, we see Paul's emphasis on the importance of preserving and passing on the Scriptures. They are far more than man's ideas; they are the very words of God, breathed right from His mouth. Protecting them is critical in light of those who will work aggressively to turn people from the truth.
 2. *Paul's Eternal Focus*: Paul was so focused on eternity at his life's end that he charged Timothy "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom..." (4:1). He wrote: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing” (4:6-8.)

- iv. Personal Requests – 4:9-22: Before sending final greetings and urging Timothy to hurry to him before winter (4:19-22), Paul expressed his loneliness due to the absence of those he mentored. He had sent a few of them on errands. Luke remained but others had abandoned him. Given the times, supporting Paul would have been much more dangerous than it had been during his first imprisonment. Still, Paul affirmed that the Lord had been at his side, enabling him to bear witness in Caesar’s court. At Paul’s first defense, the Lord had delivered him from “the lion’s mouth” (4:17 [Interpreters have identified the lion in various ways: either literally, as referring to the lions of the amphitheater, or as a reference to the emperor Nero, or even perhaps to Satan^{xii}]). This time, however, Paul was confident that his earthly life would end.

Summary Statement: In Paul’s final letter, his primary concerns were passing the baton of his faith to Timothy and ensuring the gospel was accurately transmitted from one generation to the next. Paul was passionate about things of eternal consequence.

Principle: *The eternal is all that will matter at the end of our lives.*

Those who have frequently sat at the bedside of someone near death say that, in their final moments, the dying often express concern about the influence or lack of influence they have had on the people in their lives and have questions about the Scriptures and what they say about eternity. The dying person’s only concern is with things of eternal significance.

Conclusion

As Paul wrote 2 Timothy, he knew his “race” was over and he would soon be face to face with Jesus. Although Nero had many Christians crucified (like Peter), as a Roman citizen, Paul was exempt from death by crucifixion. According to tradition, he was beheaded “before the [Roman] rulers”^{xiii} on the Ostian Way, west of Rome, in A.D. 67.

The lives of Moses, Paul, and countless others testify that when eternity is in view, the only things on earth that matter are people and the word of God. So let’s return to our opening question: How many of the “pressing issues” that were on your mind today will really matter at the end of your life? Which priorities need to be rearranged so that you are investing in lasting things and not merely driven along by the tyranny of the urgent? We will never regret a moment of time, energy, and resources well invested in people and the word of God.

ⁱ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (1 Ti 2:11–12). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

ⁱⁱ Robinson, S. J. (2004). *Opening Up 1 Timothy* (48–49). Leominster: Day One Publications.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wiersbe, W. W. (1997). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (625). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

^{iv} Kaiser, W. C., Jr., Davids, P. H., Bruce, F. F., & Brauch, M. T. (1997). *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (666–667). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

^v *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*. 1994 (D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer & G. J. Wenham, Ed.) (4th ed.) (1 Ti 2:9–15). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

^{vi} Kaiser, W. C., Jr., Davids, P. H., Bruce, F. F., & Brauch, M. T. (1997). *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (666–667). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity: “Thus, the restriction of women’s place and participation in the life and ministry of the church at Ephesus is most probably “directed against women involved in false teaching who have abused proper exercise of authority in the church (not denied by Paul elsewhere to women) by usurpation and domination of the male leaders and teachers in the church at Ephesus.”

^{vii} Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (1 Ti 2:11–12). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press: “Given women’s lack of training in the Scriptures (see comment on 2:11), the heresy spreading in the Ephesian churches through ignorant teachers (1:4–7), and the false teachers’ exploitation of these women’s lack of knowledge to spread their errors (5:13; 2 Tim 3:6), Paul’s prohibition here makes good sense. His short-range solution is that these women should not teach; his long-range solution is “let them learn” (2:11). The situation might be different after the women had been instructed (2:11; cf. Rom 16:1–4, 7; Phil 4:2–3).”

^{viii} Hughes, R.B. & Laney, J.C. (2001). *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*. The Tyndale Reference Library (637). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers: “In Paul’s day, Jewish men and boys were required to learn the law, but there was no such requirement for women. Paul did not want Christian women to be ignorant of the Scriptures and encouraged them to learn. The word “submissively” (2:11) literally means “under orders.” As they learned, women were to listen to and respect those whom God had placed in positions of church leadership. Paul’s words in 2:12 do not mean that women should never teach. They are encouraged to teach in certain contexts (cf. Titus 2:3).”

^{ix} Wilkinson, Bruce and Boa, Kenneth. *Talk Thru the New Testament*, p. 438. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, 1983.

^x Foster, J., & Frend, W. H. C. (1991–). *The First Advance: Church History 1, AD 29-500* (Rev. ed. with additions., Vol. 5, p. 72). London: SPCK.

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