



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Timothy 1:1-2

“Introduction”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee that Thou hast enabled us to gather together again in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the study the word. We thank Thee for its ministry to us. We praise Thee that through the Scriptures we may have fellowship with Jesus Christ who has loved us and given himself for us.

And we pray that through the study of this particular book that we are beginning that we may learn how to behave ourselves in the church of God as the apostle taught young Timothy. Enables us to understand and respond in the way that will bring glory and honor to our Savior who has given himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil age.

We ask Thy blessing upon each one present. And may, Lord, the ministry of the Scriptures be edifying and comforting and strengthening we pray. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we are starting a study of Paul's first letter to Timothy having as our chief goal as we study this usual little epistle, the doctrine of the church. Now in the nature of the case, a great deal of what we say will have to do with the local church, the body of believers that meet regularly in a certain place under the oversight of elders; hearing the Scriptures and observing the ordinances. But a great deal also will have to do with the church universal; that body of believers who are united regardless of their locale and their faith in Jesus Christ. But the topic of the entire

series of studies is "Paul, Timothy, and the Doctrine of the Church." But it is really simply a doctrinal exposition of Paul's first epistle to Timothy.

So tonight, I was a little ambitious in giving you the title "Law and the Assemblies of Grace." We will not get quite that far so that next time we will deal with the subject of the relationship of the Law of Moses to the teaching of grace in the local church, as is set fourth in verses 3 through 11. Tonight we want to look at the background of the epistle. We want to look at the purpose of the book. We want to say a few words about the heresy that the apostle combated in this epistle. We also want to take a look at the rather unusual salutation, which contains some emphases that are not ordinarily found in the apostle's epistles.

So first of all let's read the first two verses which form the salutation. And then we want to take a look at some of the background of this book. The apostle writes,

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let me say first a few words by way of background to 1 Timothy. It might seem rather strange to use to think that these epistles; 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, were ever called anything but the Pastoral Epistles. That's the way we know them. But actually it was not until 1726, two hundred and fifty years ago to be exact, that these epistles were called for the first time the Pastoral Epistles. Paul Anton is the first man who referred to them as the Pastoral Epistles, but this designation of them caught on and has become the regular term by which we designate these three epistles; two of them written to Timothy and one to Titus. So they are the Pastoral Epistles. Unfortunately, the term the Pastoral Epistles is not wholly adequate to describe the Epistles.

1 Timothy is a Pastoral Epistle in the since that a great deal of stress rests upon the care of the church. And Paul addresses Timothy who was an apostolic legate. We'll talk about that later in

one of the studies, an apostolic legate and seeks to encourage him and also instruct him in how he is to behave himself in the church of God or the house of God which is the church of the living God, the puller and ground of the truth.

So I think it's probably fair to say that 1 Timothy is a pastoral epistle in the sense that instructions are given concerning the care and oversight of the local church. But 2 Timothy is not a Pastoral Epistle. It is primarily a personal epistle and in it the Apostle Paul addresses Timothy and gives him primarily personal advice concerning the spiritual life.

Titus, the third of the Pastoral Epistles, is primarily a Pastoral Epistle. So we have two of the three that are primarily pastoral but one of them, 2 Timothy, is not pastoral at all. All of them, however, are addressed to persons. Two of them are addressed to Timothy. One of them is addressed to Titus. But we must not think that these were simply personal epistles. And even those that are primarily pastoral, that that were intended to be read only by Timothy and Titus. For if you will look at the conclusion of each one of the epistles you will notice that the epistles were intended to be read by others.

The apostle states in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 21, "Grace be with thee." Now, I'm going to read this in the Greek text. And it simply says, "Grace with you." but the "you" is plural. It is not singular. So, "Grace with you." The apostle addressed it to Timothy, but he fully expected Timothy to take this epistle into the meetings of the church and there to read the epistle that the apostle had written to him.

Now, at the conclusion of 2 Peter in 2 Peter chapter 4 and verse 22 the apostle concludes by saying, "The Lord be with your spirit." Now, that your is singular, "The Lord be with your spirit Timothy." Then he adds, "Grace be with you," plural. So he anticipated that his epistle would be read by Timothy, but also would be read in the meeting of the church.

The same thing is true with Titus. Titus concludes by, "Greet the ones who love us in the faith." And then he adds, "Grace be with you all," which of course as we have pointed out is

scientific and scholarly proof of the fact that Paul was from southern Tarsus. [Laughter] "Grace be with you all."

Again these epistles, you see, are addressed to persons but they are intended to be read by all. I feel very certain, although of course I cannot prove this, I feel very certain that Timothy and Titus received these epistles and they could hardly wait for the meeting of the church in which they had the opportunity to read the letters from Paul. Now, we know it was their custom to read passages from the Old Testament at their meetings. And so I'm sure that they felt that it was perfectly proper for them to read the letters that the Apostle Paul wrote in order that the instruction that the apostle gave might not only be some information that Timothy himself had but was shared by all.

The truth of God, you see, is not for a certain elite group of people who are a new kind of priest who have certain information that others cannot have. The truth of God is designated to be the possession of every single believer in Jesus Christ. So the word of God is not to be guarded by certain individuals, ministers, as if they stand on a higher plane than others in the understanding and possession of the truth of God.

The occasion of the writing of the 1 Timothy is the desire of the apostle to urge Timothy to stay on at Ephesus and combat the novel teaching of the heretics. We notice verse three, for example, of the first chapter. He says, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." And then in verse 18 through verse 20 he says this charge,

"I commit unto thee, son Timothy (or child Timothy), according to the prophecies which pointed thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

In chapter 4 verse 12 through verse 16 he says,

"Let no man despise thou youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity until I come. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership (the Presbytery). Meditate upon these things. Give thyself wholly to them that they profiting my appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine. Continue in them for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

And then in chapter 5 and verse 23 he says, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thy frequent infirmities." Evidently the apostle was somewhat concerned about the health of Timothy and wanted him to stay in good health in order that he might carry on this ministry of combating the heresies.

No there is a passage in Acts chapter 20 that we must read. So let's turn over to Acts chapter 20 because here the apostle addresses the church at Ephesus in the person of the elders and gives them some instruction that evidently was extremely needed because by the time he wrote the Pastorals conditions were not too good in the church at Ephesus. In Acts chapter 20 and verse 28; remember the apostle is addressing the Ephesian elders and remember also that Timothy now is at Ephesus. He says to these elders and bishops of the church,

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers to feed the church of God which has purchase with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember that for the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears."

Now, by the time the apostle addresses the letter to young Timothy this is some years after the incident recorded in Acts chapter 20. So evidently the apostle's warnings concerning the church at Ephesus were very suitable because by the time of the writing of first Timothy conditions were worse. And so the occasion then of the writing of this epistle, the first one to Timothy, is to urge Timothy to stay on at Ephesus and in spite of his youth to combat the false teaching of the heretics which was disturbing the group of Christians who met in that local.

The addressee is Timothy. Timothy was a young man in comparison with the apostle. He was a convert of the Apostle Paul. He had been brought to faith through the apostle's preaching. He was from the city of Lystra. Lystra prided itself in being a great city, but actually it was out in the sticks where the woods really began. That was the place from which Timothy had come.

Now, we are told in the second verse of this first chapter by the Apostle Paul that his letter's addressed to Timothy, his "genuine child in the faith." Now, that word child means a born one. It comes from the Greek word *tekto*, which means "to beget." And so *teknon* is someone who has been begotten a child. Now, the word "son, stresses a position. *Teknon* stresses the means by which the person became a son. He was born. So when he addresses Timothy here he calls him, "My own child in the faith." So Timothy was the Apostle Paul's convert. He also, in the eighteenth verse, says something that bears on this question. "This charge I commit unto thee, child Timothy." So he reminds Timothy at least twice right here in first chapter that Timothy was his own convert; no doubt to urge him to do the things that he wishes him to do.

He became a kind of assistant of the Apostle Paul. He was with Paul on his second missionary journey. In Acts chapter 16 and verse 1 through verse 3 he has contact with Timothy and Timothy goes with him on his ministry. So he was a kind of attendant of the Apostle Paul. He was also with Paul at Ephesus on the third missionary journey. We learn this from Acts chapter 19 and verse 22. So he had a great deal of contact with the Apostle Paul. In Philippians chapter 2 verse 19 through verse 23, which Paul wrote when he was in his first Roman imprisonment, Timothy is with

Paul there. So he was the apostle's convert, he has spent a great deal of time in the presence of the Apostle Paul.

And now, here he is at Ephesus after the apostle had been released from his first Roman imprisonment. He will later be addressed by Paul with Paul's last letter. 2 Timothy has been called Paul's swansong because it may have been last letter written and it was addressed to Timothy. So Timothy was a young man who had been brought to faith by the Lord Jesus and undoubtedly was of significant importance in the local church. It illustrates for us the fact that he that winneth souls is wise. It is one of the most important things for us as Christians to attempt, by the guidance of God, to lead others to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

There is an interesting anecdote about Dwight L. Moody. He attended a meeting and he came home from the meeting and some of his friends said to him, "Well, how did the meeting go?" He said, "There were two and half conversions." And they smiled. They thought he meant two adults and one child. So one of them spoke up and said, "You mean two adults and one child were converted?" He said, "No. Two children and one adult was converted," and then went on to illustrate by pointing out that a child converted has his whole life before him in service for the Lord. But an adult, such as you people are, you've only got half of your life left. And some of you haven't even got that because 35 is middle age according to Scripture. [Laughter] And some of you that are laughing who are 30, you're not far away from middle age yourself and I want to remind you of that, too. [Laughter]

It's extremely important that we really make it an earnest matter of prayer that God would use us in the leading of others to Jesus Christ. And the time to begin is when you're young in the faith. And don't ever stop when you get old.

The purpose of 1 Timothy, I think, is relatively clear and plain. If I were to pick one verse out of the epistle that seems to express most plainly Paul's purpose in writing Timothy I think I would cite the verses in verse 14 and 15 of chapter 3. There he says,

"These things write I unto thee hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long (this is 1 Timothy 3:15) that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

So the subject of the epistle is the conduct that befits those who dwell in the house of God. And when you read through this epistle it would seem to me at least that there are two spheres in which Paul discusses the conduct of Timothy. One is a kind of public and ecclesiastical sphere. That is he gives Timothy instruction concerning the appointment or concerning the work of eldership, it would be better to say work, concerning the function of the deacon. He gives some instruction then in a kind of public and ecclesiastical sense. Things that pertain to the meetings of the churches, the official meetings of the believers. And then the other aspect of the instruction is private and ethical. And here are instructions that are given to Timothy that are addressed to us in our own personal Christian life.

Now, there are different spheres, of course, in which we all have relationships. We have relationships to our family and the Scriptures have a great deal to say about our relationships to our families. We have relationship to the state in which we live. And if you haven't gotten that little letter in the mail I remind you that tomorrow is the last day. And so we have these relationships. We have to respond to them. We have relationship to the church, which means that we are responsible in certain ways to the elders of the local assembly, to the deacons of the local assembly. We should be responsive to the gifted men, who may not be elders or deacons, who are in the assembly; and so on. And then, of course, we have the relationship that has to do with our personal relationship to the Lord. So we are related to the Lord, to our family, to the state and to the church.

Now, here in 1 Timothy the stress rests upon Timothy's relationship to the church and his relationship to the Lord. And he gives Timothy instruction in both of these spheres. But essentially the theme is the conduct that befits those that dwell in the house of God.

What about the heresy that Timothy had to contend with? When you read through the pastoral epistles you discover, of course, that they are very closely related. And so the kind of heresy that is found in one is really the kind of heresy that is found in the others. What are the characteristics of the heresy that the apostle Paul desired Timothy to combat? Well, let me try to sum up some of the things that appear as you read these epistles over and over. Incidentally, that is still the best way to discover the heresy that the apostle desired Timothy to combat; read the epistles over and over and the lineaments of it begin to emerge.

First of all, it evidently involved a speculative kind of intellectualism. We read, for example, in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 4, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in the faith." And then over in chapter 6 and verse 4 the apostle writes, "He is proud knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and disputes of words of which cometh envy, strife, railings, evil suspicions." And we could also turn to Titus chapter 3 and verse 9 for the same kind of thing.

Now, the characteristic word in these three passages is the word "questionings". Now, that word meant speculative discussion. So one of the aspects of the heresy that the apostle desired to combat was a heresy that was characterized by speculative discussion. So it must have had a kind of intellectualism as a characteristic of it.

The second thing that is characteristic of it is that its followers attended to have a great deal of pride because of their knowledge of these questions over which they had endless discussions. The fourth verse of chapter 6 says, "He is proud knowing nothing but dotting about questions and disputes of words." So the heresy then was characterized by a kind of pride on the part of those who were followers of that teaching. Now, incidentally you may notice some characteristics of certain Christians who follow truth in these things. So we're not suggesting these attitudes are attitudes that could only be associated with a heresy. It's possible to hold Christianity in the wrong spirit, a spirit of pride. And unfortunately, we all sooner or later fall into this kind of thing. When we first are converted we're full of pride very frequently because we have been saved, and our families and

friends are very upset when we present the Gospel to them because we do it from the standpoint of we have the truth now and you are still lying in darkness. It's true, of course, but nevertheless you can do it in the wrong spirit. I know after I was converted one of the first things I did was to speak to all the members of my family and generally make myself totally disagreeable to them. And I doubt that they heard a word I said for a couple of years afterwards because of the attitude of pride that I had. I should have put that in that present tense, but I did in the past. [Laughter]

The third thing that characterized this teaching, evidently, was a kind of asceticism. In chapter 4 and verse 4 and 5 we read, "For (Paul is writing to Timothy) every creature of God is good don't nothing is to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving for it is sanctified by the word of God in prayer." That would seem to indicate, you see, that Timothy had been exposed to some teaching which suggested that certain things were not good and were to be refused. So evidently there was a flavor of asceticism in this teaching.

In Titus chapter 1 and verse 15 the apostle writes there to his other apostolic legate, "Unto the pure all Gospel are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even there mind conscious is defiled." So you can see then that in this teaching, which Timothy was to combat, there was a tendency to asceticism; to stand off from certain things legalistically and say, "Touch not, taste not, and handle not."

The fourth thing that characterized the heresy is immorality. In 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 6 the apostle speaks about these men who shall come in the last days. And evidently they have a resemblance to the present time of this sort. In the sixth verse he says, "Are they who creep into houses and led captive silly women," now he doesn't mean all women are silly in spite of what you might think. [Laughter] There are just certain women that are silly and there are two men that are silly two. "Laden with sins, led away various lusts." Now, you can see that there is an element there of immorality in this false teaching. In chapter 4 verse 3 of 2 Timothy we read, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears." Now, he is talking about individuals who will manifest the

immorality in time. But evidently, from the context here the apostle felt it necessary to warn Timothy about it. So characteristic was immorality. You could also look at Titus chapter 1 verse 16, and 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 15, and Titus characterized 1 and verse 11 where he speaks about men who are tainted with filthy lucre whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake." In other words, these false teachers were individuals who were lusting after money and they taught desires of obtaining the money of those whom they instructed in the faith.

Last night I was in Nashville, Tennessee teaching in one night what we spent three nights here going over in 2 Timothy. And again came to that passage in which the false teachers there were individuals who like Balaam were after the people's money primarily. So we have immorality then that is characteristic of this heresy that Paul desires Timothy to fight.

The next thing, the fifth thing, that characterizes it is what Paul calls words, and tales, and genealogies. We read chapter 1 and verse 4 of 1 Timothy where the apostle refers to endless genealogies and fables, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith. And then in chapter 6 and verse 20 he writes there, "Oh Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of knowledge, falsely so called." Titus chapter 3 and verse 9 says something that pertains to it, too. "But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law for they are unprofitable and vain." And there is some other texts that we won't have time to read, but they had to do with words, tales, genealogies.

Incidentally, these genealogies may be Jewish genealogies but later on I'm going to suggest that they also maybe something else. Jewish genealogies would be references to the fact that many of the rabbis in studying the genealogies of the Old Testament worked out very fanciful expositions based upon the genealogies of the books of Chronicles, for example.

You often wondered, I'm sure, what is the purpose of those books of Chronicles. Well, that was not one of the purposes, but the rabbis made a great deal of it and they had lengthy spiritualized accounts of truth based upon the genealogies of 1 Chronicles. Most of you, when you get there you

go to sleep in the reading of the Bible. Or probably most of you skip them and think that no one will notice. And you can just go on and you're getting along very good in the reading of the Bible by skipping all of those chapters.

I want you know one time I read through every one of those genealogies. I read every word in the Bible the first time I ever read the Bible through. Just after I was converted Dr. Barnhouse told me, "You ought to read the Bible." It was a pretty good idea. I said, "How should I read the Bible?" That's a stupid question I'm sure. He probably was very tempted to say, "Well, open it up and look at it." [Laughter] But he told me, "I want you to read it this way. I want you to begin it John and read through the New Testament." He didn't tell me why. I didn't understand enough to know why. He said, "Begin at John and read through the New Testament." I said, "Yes, sir." "And then read Matthew, Mark, and Luke." And when you finish the New Testament, then go back to Genesis and read from Genesis through the Book of Malachi." And that's exactly what I did.

And in the first year, I think it was, after I was converted I read all the through the Bible; every word. When I got to the genealogies, I still remember, I felt like I ought to skip all of those chapters. But no, I had to read it. So I sat there and looked at those words; word after word. I looked at everyone of them. [unintelligible] and pronounce them all perfectly. [Laughter] Silently, of course; and finished the whole testament wondering what in the world is the purpose of that lengthy genealogy.

Now, the sixth thing that characterized this heresy was a kind of Jewish legalism. For example, in verse 7 of 1 Timothy chapter 1 we read, "Desiring to be teachers of the law understanding neither what they say nor that about which they affirm." And then in Titus chapter 1 verse 10 and verse 14 we read, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision." And then verse 14, "Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth." So Jewish legalistic teaching also was part of this heresy.

And finally, in 1 Timothy in chapter 1 and verse 20, well let me read verse 18 through verse 20. "This charge," listen that's not the text I want. [Laughter] The text I want is 2 Timothy chapter 2

and verse 18. Hymenaeus is in both of these places, but not Philetus. So in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 18 Paul says concerning Hymenaeus and Philetus, "Who concerning the truth have heard saying that the resurrection is past all ready and overthrow the faith of some?" So characteristic also of this teaching is a denial of the resurrection.

Now remember in Scripture the denial of the resurrection means the denial of the resurrection of what? Of what? The body, B-O-D-Y, the body. Now, when we deny the resurrection we deny the resurrection of the body. Because remember the Christian faith affirms the resurrection of the body, not the resurrection of the spirit. The spirit does not die in that since. So these men were men who denied the resurrection of the body.

Well now, is there a heresy that we know from history that fits these seven characteristics that I talked about? Questionings, pride, asceticism, immortality, words, tales, genealogies, Jewish legalism, the resurrection of the body; yes there is one and it is the heresy of Gnosticism. Gnosticism fits all of these things with the exception of the Jewish legalism. And the reason that it does not include that, and yet this is part of the heresy, is that we know from history Gnosticism occasionally did mingle with certain of the Christian and Old Testament teachings. So what we have here is essentially a Gnostic type of heresy. Undoubtedly this is the beginning of the Gnostics heresy, which reached full bloom in the second and third centuries of the Christian era, and mingled with a little bit of legalism from the Old Testament.

Now, I'm sure that there may be some in the audience who do not know how to spell Gnosticism. You shouldn't be ashamed of that. In the first place, it's rather confusing because it comes from a Greek word. And the way you spell it is G-N-O-S-T-I-C-I-S-M, Gnosticism. Gnosticism is therefore a philosophy of knowledge. *Gnosis* means "knowledge" in Greek. So Gnosticism is a philosophy of knowledge.

Now, the Gnostics believed certain things that are apropos for the reading of 1 Timothy. They believe, first of all, that matter was eternal; not that God alone was eternal but that matter was also eternal. So we have a kind of dualism in Gnosticism. Furthermore, they believed that matter

was evil. It was eternal and it was evil. But they also believed in God and they believed in a holy God. Well, they therefore were faced with a problem. If God is holy and if his creation of which we're a part is evil, how may a holy God be responsible for this evil creation? So the Gnostics had to discover a new philosophy to account for this and they did this by presupposing that there were certain things which they called *aeons*, A-E-O-N-S, *aeons* or emanations which proceeded out of the holy God in heaven. Now, these *aeons* or emanations were something like angelic beings and they also proceeded from themselves. So it was like a long ladder or series of beings; one proceeding out of the other.

And since of course they were finite beings, they were not as holy as God. The first *aeon*, the highest one on the ladder, would be just a little less holy than God, and the second would be a little less holy than the first, which was a little less holy than God. And the third a little less holy than the second, and which was in turn a little less holy than the first which in turn was a little less holy than God.

Now finally after a lengthy period of time, and/or a lengthy number of emanations I should say, they finally emanated an *aeon* that was wicked enough to be responsible for the creation, according to the Gnostics. Now, these *aeons* each had a name and they each therefore had a genealogy. And part of salvation was coming to know the *aeons* and the emanations, their names and their genealogies, and through this knowledge becoming true believers according to the Gnostic system of truth.

So there were endless genealogies. Now, this kind of teaching was what the Gnostics would have called a breakthrough in doctrine. Now, it was not ultra super grace teaching I assure you. But they did call it a breakthrough. And so they taught it to others as being an esoteric system of truth, which if you understood then you would be one of the elite. But if you did not understand you would be like a natural man. In fact, the Gnostics divided men into several categories; those who were spiritual men who were the Gnostics and those who were natural men who were not Gnostics. In other words, their teaching was very much like the Apostle Paul's who divides people into the

born again and those who are not born again. So a man, in order to progress in spirituality, must first become a Gnostic and then come to know the Gnostic truth. And by understanding the Gnostic truth, well he would come to salvation through Gnosticism.

Incidentally, they had passwords. I don't know whether they were the anticipations of the fraternities and sororities of our present day or not, but I know when I was a member of a fraternity in college we had our secrets and I don't even tell them to anybody now. [Laughter] Someone met me out in the hall Sunday morning and said, "I heard you mention that you had been a member of a fraternity." I said, "Yes." And he said, "Which one?" And I told him the name. He said, "I knew it. I knew it. So am I." [Laughter] And I didn't even tell him what the secret word is because I'm not sure of him yet. [Laughter] And he's probably not sure of me either. [Laughter] But sooner or later we'll finally get to know each other well enough to shake hands in the old way we used to do in the house.

Now, they had their passwords so in this respect you see Gnosticism corresponds with what Timothy was told by Paul here. The second thing that I mentioned was the evil of matter. Now, since they believed in the evil of matter you can immediately see that a person, if he really believed the evil of matter, would have to make a decision. If matter is evil and we all have to do with matter then we must either withdraw from matter as much as we possible can, in which case asceticism would be the result. Or we may take the attitude of some and say, "How can we possibly withdraw from matter?" So if matter is evil let's just eat, drink, and be merry and have a good old time because we cannot escape it. And so we'll just live in immorality." So the Gnostic teaching then lead to asceticism on the one hand or to immorality on the other. And both of those facets are found in this teaching with which Timothy had to contend.

Now also, if matter is evil and if this body is evil then who wants to have a resurrection of the body? The body is evil so I would not be interested in a resurrection of the body. This is a prison in which my spirit is contained. And the thing I would be especially anxious to have would be a deliverance from the body and to teach that I must again enter a body someday. Well, that would

not be very favorable at all. That's what Paul also had to contend with at Corinth when he spoke to them concerning the resurrection of the body.

And furthermore, since the Jewish law and food regulations were evidently involved that would provide further reason for asceticism as is suggested in the passages. Incidentally, by the combining of these Jewish food regulations and certain legal aspects of the Mosaic Law that might provide the kind of gnosis that the Gnostic teachers would rely upon also. In other words, they became the authoritative teachers of the mosaic law; what is proper for you to eat, what is not proper for you to eat, what you must abstain from and so on.

Well, you can see that all of the aspects of the heresy that Timothy has to contend with are found in the historic heresy of Gnosticism, as we know it in the second century when it reached its full bloom. So probably what we have to do with then here in 1 Timothy is an incipient, a beginning form of Gnosticism with which Timothy had to contend.

The outline of 1 Timothy is relatively simple. The first chapter contains a charge by the apostle to young Timothy. The second and third chapters give Timothy instruction concerning the conduct of the church. And the third chapter beginning with the fourteenth verse through the sixth chapter contains instructions given to Timothy himself concerning his own conduct. So I personally outline it in this way, the first chapter; the charged Timothy. The second chapter verse 1 through chapter 3 verse 13; the conduct of the church. And verse 14 of chapter 3 through chapter 6 verse 21; the conduct of Timothy.

Well, we have ten or fifteen minutes. Let's look at the salutation. Now, in ancient times when you wrote a letter what you did was this. You wrote your name first, Liz, then you wrote the person's name to whom you were writing, Lewis to Mary. And then just simply usually a greeting and frequently just the word greeting. Greetings.

Now, the apostles were men of a different ilk. They followed in general the pattern but like so many Christians they had to relate it to the Christian faith. And so Paul generally starts you this letters by saying, "Paul," but he doesn't stop with that. He adds all these qualifying phrases. And

then sooner or later he will say, "To Timothy," or "To the church at Ephesus," or whatever it may be, "The saints at Ephesus." And then he will give a greeting. But he won't say greeting. He'll transform it into something Christian and he will say, "Grace and peace be to you," and so forth.

Well, that's what we have here, "Paul," that should have stopped and just said "Paul, Timothy, greeting." But he cannot do that. So modifying it, giving it a Christian content, he says, "Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus." In other words, the letter rises above a mere human letter. By the way, the fact that he said he was an apostle, meaning that he was a sent one from Christ Jesus means that this letter is no friendly confidential little chat; a tat-a-tat. The apostle didn't write many of that type of letter so far as we know. The letters we have are letters in which he writes with a great deal of authority, and this is no exception. "An apostle of Christ Jesus," one would have thought you could leave that out Paul with Timothy. He knew that Paul was an apostle just as well as anyone else. He had been brought into the faith. It's as if I were to say, "Lewis." If I were to address Mary and say, "Your husband." She would say, "Why in the world did you do that? I know you are my husband." Well, it may be I would have some special purpose. She might not have been so submissive recently. [Laughter] And I might have said, "Lewis, your husband," to Mary. I don't think she'd get the message. [Laughter] But nevertheless I might.

Now, the Apostle Paul says, "Paul, an apostle," and he means that Timothy is to listen with a great deal of attention to what he says through this little epistle. Now, he does not use his customary, "An apostle by the will of God," incidentally. What does that tell us about the freedom of the human will. "Paul, an apostle by the will of God." He never thought that he was faced with a decision in which he himself made in his own inner being. He was an apostle through the will of God. In other words, it was God's determination that brought him to apostleship. So even in the way he speaks of his apostleship we know that he was a follower of Martin Luther, and Jonathan Edwards and all of the rest of the saints who believed in the bondage of the human will.

Now, here he says, "An apostle of Christ Jesus by the commandment of God our Savior." Now, this word is actually stronger than "will", but I suggest to you that the commandment is really

the result of the will. It is the will of God that he be an apostle and he gives Paul a commandment that he be that as a result of it. But this command is a very strong word. In fact, this word commandment often connoted an order and was used of royal commands. That is, when the king issued a command this Greek word that is used right here in first Timothy chapter 1 verse 1, *epitage* is a royal command. So he regards this commandment as coming from God himself who is the heavenly king. So he is dispatched by a king. He is a man under orders.

Now, he speaks of God as "our Savior." That's a new way of speaking. It might surprise you, but in the New Testament that's a new way of speaking. It's not found in any of his other epistles. He never calls God "the Savior" in his other epistles. Perhaps the reason that he did this is because men were at this time calling other men savior. For example the Romans called one of their greatest generals, Scipio, "our hope and our salvation". Aescapulus, the god of healing, was also referred to as a "god of salvation, savior". Nero used it of himself and he was living about this time. And I have a hunch that the apostle might have even thought of Nero when he said here, "By the commandment of God, our Savior." It's a great point. God is our Savior. Incidentally, this is the father that is referred to as "our Savior" evidently from this context. "An apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God, our Savior."

F.W. Borum in one of his books speaks of a man who was an unbeliever whose name was Rushworth. He had been a skeptic all his life and finally he resolved to read for an hour a day the book that he had so long derided. And he was reading along and he looked up and spoke to his wife and he said, "Wife, if this book is right we are all wrong." He continued to read. A few days later he looked at his wife and he said, "Wife, if this book is right we are lost." And then a few days later he looked up to his wife and he said, "Wife, if this book is right we may be saved." And he was saved and he was saved by God our Savior. So the apostle stresses that.

Incidentally, William Barclay who is a exceedingly gifted commentator of the word of God stops right at this point and says, "Now, we must not think that this God who is our Savior is a God who requires propitiation and satisfaction before he expresses his love for us." And so he dissipates

the justice and holiness of God so that the result is that we have a namby-pamby kind of Santa Claus in heaven who is moved by all of our little appeals and acts of repentance to forgiveness apart from any shedding of blood required to satisfy the holiness and righteousness of God through penal satisfaction. You see how you can even use the good words of Scripture for heretical teaching? I wish the apostle would just come back for a little bit and give us a few words about some of these men today. The saints sit in the audience and they just drink it all in and don't notice it. Oh, how gullible we are. Then he says, "And the Lord Jesus Christ who is our hope," this is one of the great titles of Christ, "He is the hope of glory. He is the Lord Jesus Christ (or Christ Jesus) our hope."

In the Old Testament, in the forty-third psalm the psalmist says, "Why art thou cast down, O, my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God for a I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." That God in whom we hope is our Lord Jesus Christ. He's our hope of deliverance from sin. He has by himself made a purgation for sin. The only purgatory that the Bible has ever spoken about is the purgatory of the cross of Calvary where he shed his blood and has delivered the saints from their sins. So he is our hope of deliverance from sin. He's our hope of deliverance from circumstances. If you think times are bad in 1976 you're right. They are bad, but in the times of the New Testament they were bad too.

Tacitus, who wrote of this very time in his histories, says this when he began to describe this phase of history, "I am entering upon the history of a period rich in disaster, doomy with wars, rent with seditions, nay savage in it's very hours of peace. Four emperors perished by the sword. There were three civil wars. There were more with foreigners and some had the character of both at once. Rome wasted by fires, its oldest temples burned, the very capital set in flames by Roman hands, the defilement of sacred rights, adultery in high places, the see crowded with exiles, island rocks drenched with murder. Yet wilder was the frenzy in Rome, nobility, wealth, the refusal of office, it's acceptance, everything was a crime and virtue was the surest way to ruin." It's almost a description that Solzenhitzen might give of our society.

Jesus Christ at this very moment the apostle says, "He is our hope of deliverance from circumstance." Gilbert Murray spoke of this and said it was an age that was suffering from the failure of nerve. And finally, the Lord Jesus is the deliverer from the fear of death, the king of terrors.

This afternoon we were discussing death and what it means. And what the Christian has by virtue of the faith of Jesus Christ, he shall never see death; that is in its terrors. Death is not easy. It's something we all must look forward to. We don't like to think about it. We don't want to have experience of it. But the Christian in the midst of it shall experience the delivering power of God through Jesus Christ our hope. That's a great text.

Then finally he says to Timothy, "My own son," by the way that's "genuine son". That means, of course, that he is a genuine son in the sense that he is a son by new birth. Not by flesh, new birth. "My own genuine son in the faith, grace, mercy and peace." Incidentally, the apostle never addresses the churches with the word "mercy". It's always "grace" and "peace". But when we come to the pastorals it's "grace, mercy, and peace". Do you know why? Because Timothy was a teacher of the word and a teacher of the word has to deal with the churches and he needs a whole lot of mercy from God. [Laughter]

Now, that's my interpretation. I don't think it's right. [Laughter] Nevertheless, it is a fact that we do not find mercy in those others. It's grace, deliverance from guilt. Mercy, deliverance from misery. And peace, which is the result of the reception of them both. Grace, mercy, and peace from God our father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Well, there is no other salvation than through our Lord Jesus Christ who is our hope.

May I conclude with a story? W.E. Biederwolf was an evangelist of a few generations ago. He used to like to tell the story of a man who had a dream. And he dreamed that this morality and his good deeds were to make a ladder by which he could climb up to heaven. And so every time he did a good deed another rung on the ladder was added. And in this dream he finally came to the last

two rungs and then he did two good works that enabled him to add the final two rungs and he thought that the doors of

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]