



## Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together

Eighth Series: "The Right Edge" New Testament: Epistles

Lesson 26: 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon

### I. 1 Thessalonians

#### A. Introduction:

1. Paul visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. The visit is recorded in Acts 17:1-10.
2. A church was established there that consisted of Jews and Gentiles. Timothy was left behind to work with the newly established church.
3. It is generally accepted that this is the first book of the New Testament to be written, with II Thessalonians written right afterwards.
4. The second coming of Christ is mentioned in some way in every chapter of this epistle.

#### B. The City of Thessalonica

A major center about 100 miles west of Philippi with a population of about 300,000 people. It was founded in 315BC and was named after the step-sister of Alexander the Great.

#### C. Author: It is widely believed to be Paul (see Acts 18:5 and I Thess. 3:6)

#### D. Date: The spring of 50 AD.

#### E. Occasion: Timothy has arrived in Corinth with a report on the condition of the church and Paul feels the need to respond (see I Thess. 3:6-7).

#### F. Purpose/Outline:

1. To thank the Lord for the healthy condition of the church (1:2-10)
2. To make a case against the false accusations made against him (2:1-3:13)
3. To make suggestions about how they could continue to grow (4:1-5:24)

### II. II Thessalonians

#### A. Introduction

This letter also comes from the pen of Paul while he tarried in Corinth. Apparently, not long after his first epistle was sent, Paul received word that the church was struggling. And so he writes them another personal letter.

#### B. Date: Summer of 50 AD.

#### C. Occasion/Purpose: There were two reasons Paul felt the need to write again so soon.

A disturbing letter that was supposedly written by Paul was being circulated. It stated that the "day of the Lord" had already passed. Paul wanted them to know that it was not his writing and that Christ's return was still future. (See II Thess. 2:2)

He also wanted to correct the notion of some that the proper response to preparing for the return of Christ was to quit your job and just wait around unproductively. (See 3:6-15)

D. Outline:

Chapter One: His thanksgiving and prayer for the church

Chapter Two: His discussion about the coming of Christ

Chapter Three: His clarification and warning against idleness

### III. I Timothy and II Timothy

A. Introduction

1. Along with the book of Titus, these three epistles are called the “Pastoral Epistles”. They are written to two individuals who were serving as pastors in local churches. Timothy served in Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3) and Titus was on the island of Crete when Paul wrote his letter. (See Titus 1:5)
2. They were likely written in this order: I Timothy, Titus and then II Timothy.
3. These are the most personal of all the epistles. Paul had a warm relationship with both these men and expresses his love in these letters. Because he is writing to an individual whom he cares deeply about, we get some very personal and valuable insights into Paul himself from these three books.

B. Dates: I Timothy was probably written from Macedonia between 62 and 66 AD. II Timothy was written towards the end of Paul’s life while he languished in a Roman prison. It was written in approximately 67 AD.

C. Occasion/Purpose:

1. I Timothy

- a. With a pastor’s heart, Paul urges Timothy “to stay on in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrine any longer.” (I Tim. 1:3)
- b. He deals with problems that have arisen in the church and gives Timothy practical advice on how to deal with them.

2. II Timothy

Paul is expressing some personal needs. He longs to see his “son” and would like Timothy to come before winter. He needs his warm coat and his books.

D. Outline:

1. I Timothy

Chapter One: Notice the clarification of Timothy’s job (1:3-11)

Chapter Two and Three: Practical instruction regarding prayer, the role of men and women, pastors and deacons.

Chapter Four: Notice Paul’s special instructions to Timothy regarding his pastoral duties (4:11-16)

Chapter Five: Paul address special groups in the church like widows, elders and slaves

Chapter Six: Paul explains the danger of loving money and gives a charge to Timothy

2. II Timothy

Chapter One: Paul gives encouragement on how to be faithful

Chapter Two: He continues that discussion and outlines what a workman that is approved of God will look like

Chapter Three: Paul discusses Godlessness in the last days and gives his personal charge to Timothy ( 3:14-16)

## IV. Titus

### A. Introduction

Probably written between I and II Timothy, this letter is the shortest of the Pastoral Epistles. "But it is rich in doctrinal and practical values and is worthy of study in its own right" (Expositor's Commentary, p. 421). It is written to the young pastor, Titus. He was an uncircumcised Greek convert who was likely won to Christ in Acts 11:25-26. According to I and II Corinthians, Titus made several trips to Corinth on Paul's behalf (see I Cor. 16:1-4. II Cor. 7:6-15, 9:2, 12:18), and travelled with Paul throughout Asia Minor.

### B. Occasion/Purpose

Paul wanted to encourage and strengthen Titus. He knew he would face opposition in this church (see 1:10, 2:15 and 3:10). He wanted to reinforce Titus's authority in working with these people.

### C. Date: Written in 64 or 66 AD, depending on whether or not there were two imprisonments in Rome.

### D. An Outline:

Chapter One: Concerns itself with church organization (role of elders etc.)

Chapter Two: Paul outlines the role of pastoral ministry

Chapter Three: Final practical reminders: Be in subjection to rulers (3:1), avoid foolish controversies (3:9) and how to deal with a divisive person (3:10).

## V. Philemon

### A. Introduction

1. Written while Paul was in prison in Rome, this is a very personal letter to a Christian slave owner named Philemon. Paul is writing on behalf of a runaway slave named, Onesimus.

With only 335 Greek words, Paul gives us some incredible insights into the effect love can have on all kinds of relationships.

2. It was sent to Colossae along with other letters (the epistle to the church at Ephesus and a lost letter to the Laodiceans (see Col. 4:16).

### B. Purpose:

This is a book about relationships. Instead of bitterness, Paul asked for openness on the part of Philemon. Instead of rejection, Paul asked for acceptance. Instead of punishment, Paul asked for love.

Philemon had all kinds of rights that could have been exerted, but Paul appeals for authentic Christian love to cover all the sins of the past.

## VI. So What?

Consider Paul's perspective in II Timothy 4:6-8. Does that match yours?

### Discussion Questions:

1. Consider Paul's final instructions to the Thessalonians in I Thess. 5:12-28. What are some practical steps that he encourages?
2. If you were going to personalize I Timothy 1:12-14, what would it say?
3. What is Paul trying to stress with the "itching ears" comment in II Timothy 4:3?
4. Discuss why Titus 3:1-2 would be a great motto for modern living.

A.

Chapter One: Paul gives instructions concerning elders

- I. Chapter Two: His instructions to the young pastor are focused on how to deal with different age groups (2:2-6) and outlining the foundations for Godly living
- II. Chapter Three: After addressing some motives for Godly living, Paul turns his attention to personal instructions and greetings.