

The Dynamic Church.

Studies in 1&2Timothy and Titus.

The Pastoral Letters.

Welcome to our studies in the Pastoral letters. During the coming programmes we shall be looking at 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. These three letters were written by Paul towards the end of his life in about 62 AD. Today we begin with Paul's first letter to Timothy.

Paul first met Timothy in Lystra on his first missionary journey recorded for us in Acts chapter 14. It's likely Timothy came to faith in Christ at that time. Paul says in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 2, "To Timothy my true son in the faith". Paul wasn't Timothy's literal physical father, but Timothy was born again into the family of God through Paul's preaching. Timothy isn't mentioned by name until Acts chapter 16 verses 1 and 2. This is during Paul's second missionary journey when he made a return visit to Lystra. We read that Paul "came to Derbe and then to Lystra where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra spoke well of him". Clearly Timothy had grown enough in the Lord since his conversion for him to be well spoken of by the church leaders. Conversion should always be followed by spiritual growth and development in our walk with God. If you are not growing in the Lord then you need to ask yourself if you are truly saved.

Timothy became a key worker alongside Paul and joined him on many of his missionary trips. He became a reliable assistant. Paul gave Timothy a responsible job to do. He asked him to stay in Ephesus and provide guidance for the church. We read in 1 Timothy 1 verse 3, "Stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrine". It's been said that Paul appointed Timothy to be the Pastor of the church at Ephesus. We have seen that this group of three letters is called the "Pastoral letters". This is a little misleading. The church at Ephesus was already pastored by Elders. We read in Acts 20 verse 17, "From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the Elders of the church". This took place well before Paul wrote this first letter to Timothy. The title "Pastoral Letters" was first given by Paul Anton of Halle in 1726 AD. Ever since they've been grouped under that name. It would be more accurate to say that Timothy was appointed as an apostolic delegate to

Ephesus. He was an apostolic trouble-shooter! Timothy's role was to deal with certain problems that had arisen in the church, and to shape it into a dynamic church for the Lord. So the Pastoral letters give us insight into the ideal make up of a dynamic church. A church well ordered and well structured for optimum effectiveness. The key verse of 1 Timothy is chapter 3 verse 15, "If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth".

The main feature of a dynamic church is the centrality of the Gospel. We read in chapter 1 verse 15, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst". We mustn't be sidetracked by other themes and ideas. Paul warns of the sort of things that will distract the church. Alongside his warning about false doctrine in verse 3, he also says in chapter 1 verse 4, "nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work-which is by faith". Myths are empty superstitions and unfounded stories. They are speculative and lead away from the clear truths found in the scriptures. Genealogies were important to Jews because they liked to trace their origins and discover which tribe they belonged to. Natural descent is not important, but what is vital is receiving Jesus and being born into his family through the new birth. The issue isn't your natural history but whether you belong to Jesus. Anything else leads to arguments and division. They hinder God's work. They certainly do not promote faith and obedience in love. Paul puts things in proper perspective in verse 5. He says, "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith". In fact, all forms of false teaching are destructive. Paul mentions this to Timothy in verses 18 and 19. He says, "Fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith". It's important that you belong to a church where you are taught the word of God. This will provide you with a good foundation for faith, and save you from being led astray by every wind of false doctrine that comes along.

The problem in the church at Ephesus was that there were teachers who had a wrong view of the relationship of the law to the gospel. They argued to be saved you must also keep the law as well as believing in Jesus. The law is the Ten Commandments. Paul says of these teachers in verse 7, "They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know

what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm". It must be understood that it isn't by believing the gospel *and* keeping the law that a man is saved. Paul acknowledges that the law is good but he says in verse 9, "We also know that law is not made for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill fathers and mothers, for murderers, for adulterers, for perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers-and whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God". The law doesn't save us from sin but teaches us our sin. The law exposes our sin. It's designed to bring us to the same point it brought Paul. When he compared his life to the requirements of the law he had to confess in verse 13, "I once was a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man". Paul says in Romans 7 verse 7, "For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said 'Do not covet'". The law caused him to see his sinfulness. He says in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 16, "But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, *the worst of sinners*, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life". If Jesus can save the worst of sinners in Paul then there's hope for you. No matter how many times you've sinned and offended God you can know his grace and forgiveness. If you're not convinced you're a sinner just compare your behaviour to the Ten Commandments. Have you put God first in your life? If not you've broken the first one. Have you ever lied or stolen? There's two more! God loves to show mercy. It's mercy you need. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners like you. Call on him today and be saved.

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We now begin 1 Timothy chapter 2. We continue to look at the features of a dynamic church. We saw in chapter 1 that a healthy church focuses on the gospel. Other key features are found here in this second chapter.

There will be emphasis on prayer. The dynamic church is a praying church. Paul says in verse 1, "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone". We see here the ingredients of prayer. It includes requests. We are free to talk to God and ask him for anything that we need. He loves to provide for us in answer to prayer. Make your requests specific so when the answer comes he will receive the glory. Then there are general matters referred to here as *prayers*. The word "prayer" as it's used here has the idea covering all aspects of life. There's nothing you can't bring to the Lord in prayer. Then there are intercessions. These are pleas on behalf of others. Prayer should also include thanksgiving. This is often the missing element in prayer. Be sure to thank the Lord when the answer comes. Paul says in verse 2 that we are to pray, "For Kings and for all in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness". It's unlikely that we will ever have a government that is thoroughly Christian in all it does. We can pray, though, that regardless of the way a government behaves the church is free to continue to enjoy liberty and freedom of movement and of worship. Pray especially that Kings and leaders will become Christian. Paul says in verses 3 and 4, "This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth". The chief mission of the church is to evangelise men and women from all classes and backgrounds. Paul says in verse 7, "And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle". Pray for those in leadership in your country regularly.

The key to effective praying is a proper inner attitude. Paul says in verse 8, "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer". Some people like to literally lift up their hands when they pray. That's fine, but it's not really what this verse is asking. Does it mean

that if we don't physically lift our hands we're not praying? Surely, Paul can't be suggesting that! Lifting up holy hands to God can also be understood as a symbol of holiness. David asks a question in Psalm 24 verses 3, "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place"? In other words, who can approach the throne of grace and meet with God? He gives the answer in verse 4, "He who has *clean hands* and a pure heart". Clean hands represent holy living. There's a children's song that says, "Be careful little hands what you do"! So, Paul says in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 8 that men must pray, "without anger or disputing". The state of the heart is everything. In the same way Paul says to the women in verse 9, "I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes". Certainly a Christian woman should wear modest clothes. The apostle isn't saying that a woman should never wear any of the other things he mentioned. What he is saying is that a Christian woman shouldn't make these things her main concern. Her main concern should be to please God. Again, the heart must be right. He goes on to say in verse 10, "but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God". It's behaviour and character that God considers as we approach him in prayer.

The dynamic church will follow God's order. The scriptures teach that men and women are equal before God in salvation. Paul says in Galatians chapter 3 verse 28, "There is neither....male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". The scripture also teaches the different role relationships between men and women. For example, we read in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 3, "Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man". Paul shows one area where this is outworked in church life. It's here in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 11 to 15. Since headship and rule is given to man it would be inappropriate for a woman to take on that role. Preaching and teaching to a congregation is an exercise of headship and authority. So, Paul says in verses 11 and 12, "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent". This is not absolute silence, because Paul has already given guidance on how women should pray in public. It's silence in relation to any ministry which involves rule and authority. Some argue that Paul was a man of his own time and culture and reflected the view of women held then. But Paul presents his argument from the Old Testament scriptures. First he refers to the order of creation. He

says in verse 13, "For Adam was formed first then Eve". Eve was created to be Adams helper. The woman is to complement the man. They work together each in their own role. He also argues from the entrance of sin. He says in verse 14, "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner". In other words, Eve took the lead and when she did she acted contrary to the divine order and problems arose. True freedom and purpose is found by men and women as they each take up their place in the divine plan and arrangement in the home and in the church.

There will be many opportunities for women to serve in other ways in the life of the church. These include Sunday School teaching, Ladies meetings and ministries, evangelism, and teaching men and women who are young in the faith, or who need correction. Pricilla did this with her husband Aquilla when they both taught Apollos the correct meaning of Baptism. Alongside church activities where there is real opportunity for ministry, Paul directs the woman to think about her influence in the home. This is where her godly influence will have the most impact. He says in verse 15, "But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety". He isn't saying childbearing will save her soul- only faith in Christ can do that- but that childbearing would provide her with a place of ministry. She mustn't think that because she is not involved in public preaching and teaching she has no opportunity to share the word. She is saved from this by being the main influence in the home, bringing her children up in the knowledge and instruction of the Lord. As she brings up her children her godly influence will impact them. The Greek word translated "saved" can also be translated "restored". She mustn't think that because of the result of the fall she is rejected by the Lord. No, Paul encourages her to see that there is restoration and usefulness in his service. She is restored through childbearing to be an evangelist to her own children! Never undervalue your role as a mother and homemaker. It's a wonderful calling!

So, whether male or female, continue to pray faithfully, and continue to work diligently, in the role the Lord has given you.

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We have arrived at chapter three of 1 Timothy. We're looking at the features of the dynamic church. This third chapter deals with the theme of leadership. The dynamic church will have good godly leaders. Biblically the church is led by Elders and Deacons. In this chapter Paul shows how to recognise those with gifts for leadership. It's often been said that the health of a church begins and ends with its quality of leadership. The world often judges Christianity by its leaders. It's church leaders who end up in the news when they do something wrong. So church leadership is important and we need to get it right.

The office of Elder is covered in verses 1 to 7. The qualifications of the Elder have to do with character rather than personality or practical gifting. God isn't necessarily looking for charismatic dynamic people, but faithful people to lead his church. The function of the Elder is to oversee the spiritual life and direction of the church. The word Elder is the title of the office. The word overseer describes the function of the office. We read in verse 1, "If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer he desires a noble task". This is the first way to spot a potential church leader. He will have an inclination to care for the church. He will already be involved in the life and ministry of the church. The desire to minister to God's people will be there to be seen. There will be evidence of a real concern for people and their spiritual needs.

Paul lists the requirements for the overseer. He says in verse 2, "Now the overseer must be beyond reproach". This is fundamental to the office. This doesn't mean that the overseer will be perfect, but he will be honest and full of integrity. Paul also says in verse 2 he must be, "the husband of one wife". This shows that the overseer should be male. This confirms what we noted in the last chapter about the different role relationships between men and women in church life. Headship, authority, and leadership are given by God to men. Therefore, it is to be expected that the position of overseer is to be held by a man. This is because it's a position of responsibility involving leadership in the church. I know this is a

controversial subject today but I think we need to note the language of scripture and apply it as accurately as we can. The overseer must be an example of God's will in marriage. God wants one man and one woman to marry and share their lives together. Polygamy was practised in Paul's day. So Paul says in verse 2 the overseer must be "the husband of one wife". In other words, the overseer will be a male committed to the divine plan for marriage. Verse 2 goes on to show that the overseer will be temperate, which means he will be watchful over his life and habits and will avoid sinful indulgence like gluttony and drunkenness. He will be respectable so his behaviour will be glorifying to God. The overseer will be hospitable. His home will be open to all, and he will be welcoming to the people of God. He'll be gentle and non-argumentative. He won't live for money. Beware of anyone who seeks position in church to make money out of God's people. He will also manage his own home life well. Paul makes the point in verse 5, "if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church". The overseer shouldn't be a new convert. Paul gives the reason for this. He says in verse 6, "he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil". Taking a position of leadership can cause a new convert to think too highly of himself. The overseer needs to be a man of great humility.

The qualifications for the Deacon are found in verses 8 to 13. The qualifications are similar to those of the overseer because again character is more important. The role of the Deacon is different from that of the overseer or Elder. The Deacon is called to take care of the practical needs of the church. This relieves the Elders to concentrate entirely on the spiritual ministry of shepherding the church through preaching, teaching and prayer. The idea of the Deacon is first seen in Acts chapter 6 verses 1 to 7. The Grecian Jews complained that they were being neglected in favour of the Hebrew Jews in the daily distribution of food. We read in verses 2 and 3, "So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom'". So the model for what was to be known later as the office of Deacon was born. Like the Elder, the Deacon is to be male, because the office of Deacon involves aspects of authority and leadership even though it's a more practical type of leadership. So we note the same requirement as for the overseer. We read in verse 12, "A Deacon must be

the husband of one wife". Verse 11 says, "In the same way their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy in everything". Some wonder why it is that the character of the Deacons wives should be listed and not those of the Elders, especially as the duties of the Elders are, relatively speaking, more important than that of the Deacons. The Deacons wives are mentioned separately from the office of deacon because holding an office in the church is an expression of leadership and authority reserved for men. Their character is mentioned because they are able to assist their husbands in their office in what is a very practical ministry. They are able to help in the "waiting on tables". The wives of overseers would be much more restricted in helping their husbands because of the implications of the greater spiritual authority and rule exercised by them. This rule would include the shaping, guidance, and direction of the people of God.

Paul has written all of this for the reason he gives in verse 15. He says, "If I am delayed, you will know how to conduct themselves in God's household". God's pattern must be followed. The dynamic church does this and experiences God's blessing. The ability to do it comes from the Lord himself. Paul says in verse 16, "The mystery of godliness is great". The "mystery of godliness" is the revealed secret of godly living. The basis of this is the person and work of Jesus because without him we can do nothing. Paul shows this in the rest of verse 16. He uses what is probably an ancient Christian creedal statement. He says of Jesus, "He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken to glory". The way to live a godly life, and do the will of God, is by availing yourself of all that Christ has done for you and all that he has for you. This becomes available to us because of his death burial and resurrection. Make sure you choose good leaders for your church and then support them in prayer and commitment.

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We now turn our attention to chapter 4 of 1 Timothy. The dynamic church will be a healthy church. It will be healthy in doctrine and conduct. In this chapter Paul tells Timothy the signs of false doctrine. The chapter begins with a warning. We read in verse 1, "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons". It's clear that all false teaching is from a demonic source. It is cleverly disguised and is expressed through human beings. Paul says in verse 2, "Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose conscience has been seared as with a hot iron". This activity is referred to in 2 Corinthians 11. We read in verses 11 to 15, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness." Not everything that is taught as Christian doctrine is necessarily from the Lord. We need to be people of discernment in these days.

Paul provides us with some tests to see whether a person is really teaching the truth. The first is false asceticism. The heretic's in Paul's day said that material things are evil. They were known as the Gnostics. We read in verse 3, "They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods". Forced celibacy and controlled diet are marks of false teachers. These things are natural and to be enjoyed. God instituted marriage. God gives food for us to eat and enjoy. Those who know the truth enjoy these blessings under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We read in verses 3 to 5, "foods....which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving because it is consecrated by God and prayer". The mark of false teaching is that it leads to bondage. False teachers seek to exercise control. They want to control your behaviour and habits. The truth leads to liberty. Now no food is to be viewed as unclean. Do you say grace before your

meal? That's how to receive all food with thankfulness. The scripture tells us in James chapter 1 verses 16 and 17, "Do not be deceived my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father".

The second test is the test of godliness. The false teacher is more concerned with myths. Paul says in verse 7, "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives tales". The problem with these subjects is that they lead to meaningless speculation and debate. The purpose of our salvation is to grow in godliness. So we read in verse 7, "Train yourself to be godly". How is this achieved? Paul tells us in verse 8. He says, "For physical exercise is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come". Godliness is achieved through spiritual exercise. This includes reading scripture, applying it to your life, prayer, and fighting the good fight against the world the flesh and the devil. Any teaching that distracts you from this aim is false. When you do this you get the best out of this life as you develop your walk with God, and the blessing of a future life in glory. Then you will enter into your rewards. It's a question of where your hope is placed. If you place it in the teachings of the heretics, and conform to their rules, you will miss salvation. Paul says in verse 10, "we have put our hope in the living God who is the saviour of all men and especially of those who believe". Myths, fables, and rules are a distraction. The truth is always Christ centred, bringing hope and liberty to all who believe. Timothy is told to preach this. We read in verse 11, "Command and teach these things". Where is the source for this Christ-centred ministry? The answer is in verse 13. Paul says, "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and teaching". Clearly Bible based study and teaching is where to find liberating truth. He goes on to say in verse 16, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers". There are three aspects to our salvation. We have been saved from the penalty of sin. We are being saved daily from the world, the flesh and the devil. This is the daily work of sanctification. We will be saved finally from and reach the new heavens and the new earth. It's the second of these that Paul has in mind. Some people don't value doctrine and avoid studying it. Some say doctrine is divisive. God says it's a lifesaver! Sound doctrine will lead you on to maturity in Christ. It will save you from the allurements of the world, the demands of the flesh and the temptations of the devil. Doctrine informs the mind about God's will, and what he expects from you. It teaches you

how to be an overcomer in Christ. All this is done in the power of the Holy Spirit who enables you to learn the doctrines and live them out. The other source of teaching is example. The Bible teacher should be an example to all, and a perfect illustration in his own life of what he teaches from the scripture. Paul says in verse 12, "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity". The false teacher will be inconsistent in his life. There will be flaws, even perversions. He will lack true godliness. Are you involved in church leadership? Can the congregation see Christ in you? Do they see any inconsistency between what you say and how you behave? God says persevere in doctrine and godliness. You will be blest. Others will grow in their faith.

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We are looking today at 1Timothy chapter 5. In the previous chapter Paul taught the importance of training in godliness. Now we see how this is practiced in everyday life. This is the mystery of godliness with its feet on the earth. Real godliness is always practical. The dynamic church is strong on good relationships.

The church is made up of all types of people from all ages and circumstances. Harmony is vital. The dynamic church is a united church with a practical ministry to each member. In this chapter Paul looks at the relationships within the church. He has Timothy's behaviour primarily in view but these truths can be applied by us all. If it's necessary to rebuke an older man it must be done gently. It is likely that the older men referred to were the ones guilty of teaching false doctrine. Verse 1 says, "Do not rebuke an older man harshly but exhort him as if he were your father". It must be done with respect and care. We read in Galatians 6 verse 1, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently". Paul goes on to say in 1 Timothy 5 verses 1 and 2, "Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity". This attitude of concern and love lies at the heart of meaningful fellowship. It fosters togetherness. Christians should never be guilty of speaking in anger to each other.

In Paul's time the age of sixty was regarded as the age for retirement, and the age after which a woman was not seen as eligible for marriage. Paul gives instructions about the needs of widows in the church. The early church had a "widows list". We read in verse 9, "No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty". The care of the widow goes back to Old Testament times. It has its roots in God's care for them. We read in Psalm 146 verse 9, "The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and widow". We see Old Testament biblical principles being used by the early church. We mustn't think that the Old Testament is null and void for us today. There are many lessons to learn from it to help us in our walk with God as Christians. The "widows list" was probably a method of financial and practical support administered by the Deacons of the church. The list was

intended for destitute widows. If a widow had a family then it was their responsibility to look after her. We read in verse 4, "But if a widow has children or grandchildren these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents". The widow who would be put on the churches "widows list" would be a believer. That was one of the conditions. Paul refers to her in 1 Timothy 5 verse 5 as, "The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her trust in God". In verse 10 she is described as one who, "is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the saints feet, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kind of good deeds". We looked at the role of women in the church in a previous study. The qualities mentioned here show what a rich ministry a woman can exercise in church life, as well as in the family. This is opposite to the character of the unsaved widow. Paul describes her in verse 6. He says, "But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives". The unsaved widow lives for herself and what pleases her and not God. She doesn't trust in God, and resorts to all sorts of carnal methods for earning her money. What type of woman are you? Are you active in serving the Lord in the church? Do you trust God to meet your needs? Are you pleasing yourself and devising your own plans to get by without regard for the Lord?

The younger widow is best to remarry. This will stop them from wasting time and slipping into gossip and becoming idle. This will give the enemy an opportunity to accuse the young women of the church and discredit their testimony. Paul says in verse 14, "So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity to slander". Younger widows need focus and to spend their time in a meaningful and righteous way.

Paul's final words in this chapter deal with the treatment of Elders. The scriptures teach both the plurality and parity of the Eldership. Verse 17 says, "The Elders who direct the affairs of the church". The plural word "Elders" denotes plurality. That they are mentioned as a group shows their parity. This means that they are all equal. Within the Eldership there will be one or more set apart for the preaching and teaching of God's word. This one would be the Pastor and Teacher that Paul mentions in Ephesians chapter four. It's there he lists the ministry gifts given for the building up of God's people. He says in verse 11, "...and some to be pastors and teachers". Ideally, the teaching Elder should be supported

full time by the church so he can work without distraction studying the word of God. We read in verse 18, “For the scripture says `Do not muzzle the ox while it is trading out the grain` and `The worker deserves his wages`”. To free up the teaching Elder to study is vital if the church is going to be fed on God`s word. It`s also important for the Elder so that through his careful studies he will be able to spend time arriving at sound conclusions. Paul says in 2Timothy 2 verse 15, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth”.

May our fellowship be practical as we serve the Lord where he has placed us. We are called to support the needy. The widow has her own needs but she represents all who are left without any real help. It`s worth asking yourself the question, “what practical things have you got in place in your church to help the helpless, the destitute, and the lonely and vulnerable”? We are also called to support practically those who minister Gods word to us. May we know God`s help as we put this into practice.

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Paul's teaching on how godliness outworks itself practically continues in chapter 6. In Bible times slavery existed. Paul gives instruction about how Christian slaves and Masters should relate to each other. We read in verse 1, "All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered". Paul didn't condone slavery. He addressed the situation as it existed in society. He told servants that if they are able to take freedom to do so. We read in 1 Corinthians 7 verse 21, "Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you- although if you can gain your freedom do so". The Christian church's priority isn't first and foremost social reform. Some teach that we must impact the community where we live with good deeds first and change will happen. The church's first priority is to preach the gospel and see the lives of people changed. That's the starting point. Arising out of that social reform will happen as men and women live out the principles of the Christian faith. Many of history's greatest social reformers have been Christians. It was the work of the Christian William Wilberforce that brought about the abolition of slavery. He was motivated in the first place by his Christian convictions.

The gospel contains the seed to destroy slavery. When a master became a believer his attitude toward his slave changed, and he treated him like a brother. The same was true of the slave toward his master when he was converted. If both master and slave became Christians then the nature of their relationship changed. This ended the usual master/slave relationship. Neither of them should abuse this. In verse 2 Paul says to the servant, "Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and are dear to them". If you have a Christian employer give him a good day's work. If you have a Christian employee, treat him fair and provide a good wage for him.

Paul mentions false teacher again in verse 3. They are mentioned in the context of earning a living. The way to recognise a false teacher is given in verse 3, "If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching he is conceited and understands nothing". Sound doctrine is Christ centred and leads to godliness. It creates harmony and peace in relationships. False doctrine leads to unrest. We read in verse 4 that the false teacher, "has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction". They may have told servants that devotion to God is the road to personal, financial, or social betterment. They suggested that freedom or social advancement was the test of godliness. They taught that climbing the social ladder was the proof God`s blessing. We know that God promises to save all who come to him through Christ. He promises forgiveness of sins and his abiding presence. But he never promises an easy road and prosperous life. When the promises of the false teachers didn`t happen it created the friction Paul spoke of. This is because it made the servant discontent and dissatisfied with his lot. He began to react wrongly toward his master. He became impatient and sharp. He thought he`d been let down by God because his circumstances hadn`t changed. Sound doctrine promotes contentment whatever our position in life may be. False teachers are more concerned about financial prosperity rather than promoting godly contentment in every circumstance. Paul says this in verse 5 they are, "men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain". Beware of any preacher who tells you that health and wealth are always the signs of God`s blessing in your life, and to get it you are asked to send money to his ministry. Some of the greatest Christians were often poor or experienced illness. Paul says in verse 6, "godliness with contentment is great gain". We are to be content with food and clothing. He warns of the danger of seeking riches. He says in verses 9 and 10, "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil". The reason for this is that seeking riches stifles spiritual progress. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 6 verse 24, "You cannot serve both God and money". One or the other will take up your time and energy. Riches also have the potential to remove opportunities to exercise faith, hope and trust in God. We read in 1 Timothy verse 17, "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope

in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment”. We mustn't think that riches are evil of themselves. If you have wealth that's not sinful, but it's right to use it for the Lord's work. Paul says this to the rich believers in verse 18, “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share”.

The way we are called to live is found in verse 11. Paul says to Timothy, “But, you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith”. Progress in these spiritual qualities are evidence of God's blessing. This must be our aim through all the years of our lives. We read in verse 14, “I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Keep focused on the coming of the Lord and at that time you will enter into your rewards. We read in verse 19, “In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age”.

The Dynamic Church.

Studies in 1&2Timothy and Titus.

The Pastoral Letters.

We move on to 2 Timothy, the second of the three Pastoral letters. This letter is probably the last one that Paul wrote. When Paul wrote 1 Timothy he was free having been released from house arrest in Rome. A few years had passed since Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy in 62 AD. After being freed from house arrest Paul travelled on what some have called his fourth missionary journey. Scripture doesn't provide the itinerary for this journey. It's possible to work it out from the various places Paul said he wanted to visit he mentioned in other letters. But that's another study on its own. Towards the end of this journey Paul was arrested and imprisoned in Rome. Nero was Emperor and he accused the Christians of setting fire to the city. Paul was caught up in this. 2 Timothy was written about this time around 67 AD. Paul wrote it from a dark and dismal Roman prison.

It's often been said that Timothy had a timid personality. Paul says in chapter 1 verse 7, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self discipline". The question is, was this a weak character trait, or was it a timidity over a specific thing? These were difficult days for the church. It was a temptation to become silent and not speak up for Jesus. In the context Paul talks about not being ashamed. He says in verse 8, "So do not be ashamed to testify about the Lord". Timothy was in danger of being timid about being bold for Christ. The word "timid" in the original Greek means "cowardice or shame". Shame means here the fear of rejection because of being connected with Jesus and other Christians. The dynamic church will be made up of believers who are bold to speak out for their saviour. I wonder if you speak up for the Lord where you are.

Paul gives Timothy reasons to be bold. We can learn from these ourselves, and think about them when we're tempted to be fearful and silent. He begins with the salutation and says in verse 2, "To Timothy, my dear son, Grace, mercy and peace from God the father and Christ Jesus our Lord". Usually, when Paul begins a letter he mentions grace and peace. Here he adds mercy. Grace says God accepts you in Christ. Peace says God is with you watching out for you. Mercy says God knows your pain and will help you in it. Knowing God's mercy

will help you be bold as you suffer as a Christian. He knows about you and cares for you. Always remember that your Christian brother and sisters are praying for you in your difficulties. Paul assures Timothy in verse 3, "night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers". In verses 4 and 5 Paul reminds Timothy of his spiritual heritage. He says, "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice". When you become fearful think of God's goodness to you and how he's been working in your life over the years. Remember the calling of God and the gift he's given you that you might serve him well. Paul says in verse 6, "fan into flame the gift of God which is in you". Develop your ministry. Use it faithfully and unashamedly. Then recall the power you have from God. We read in verse 7 that we have, "a spirit of power, of love and of self discipline". You may feel weak and inadequate but God has given you the power to be bold. The indwelling Holy Spirit enables you. Also when you love someone it removes the fear you might have toward them. If you really love the lost then you'll not be shy about speaking to them about Jesus. It comes down to a choice you make. Paul says in verse 8, "So do not be ashamed". It's something you must do. This is where faith is used. Is God with me? If he is I will speak and not be afraid. A further encouragement is to remember you are the product of God's plan and purpose. Paul says in verse 9, "God... saved us and called us to a holy life not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace". Stand strong when you're opposed because you have a glorious calling. You preach about the only message that makes sense in a dying world. One truth that encouraged Paul to remain unashamed was the fact that even if he should die for being a believer it wasn't the end. He says in verse 10 that Jesus, "has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel". He reminds Timothy of this so that even if he loses his life for Christ the future is endless and bright. We have a great hope as Christians! We need to realise that suffering is part of following Jesus. Don't be surprised when it comes. We read in verse 8, "Join with me in suffering for the gospel". Paul says in verses 11 and 12, "And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am". Once you identify yourself with Jesus Christ the world will persecute you. But we need never be ashamed because the gospel we teach is true and the only answer for mankind. It's important to leave everything in God's hands as we face trials and problems as Christians. We don't know what the future holds but we do know that the future is under his control. Paul says in verse 12, "I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed,

and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day". Paul had entrusted his soul into God's hand and safe keeping. No matter what storms you face your soul is safe in the rock of ages. He will bring you to the end of the race and take you to heaven where he is. The last truth that should help us not to be ashamed is that God has entrusted you with his gospel. We read in verse 14, "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you". The deposit is what he mentioned in the verse 13. He says, "What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus". What a privilege to be custodians of God's word, and for him to trust us with its proclamation. This is an honour. How can we be timid when the King of the universe has done this? How can we be ashamed of such a thing? If the leader of your country asked for you personally, and gave you a responsible job to do, wouldn't you let everyone know about it? I think you would. Well don't be ashamed of the work God has called you to do for him.

The Dynamic Church.

Studies in 1&2 Timothy and Titus.

The Pastoral Letters.

We continue in our studies entitled the dynamic church. We turn to 2 Timothy chapter 2. In this chapter we see that the dynamic church is forward looking and focussed. We read in verse 2, "And the things that you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will be qualified to teach others". Paul was in prison and about to be martyred. His ministry had come to an end. He was wise enough to train up men to take his place. Timothy was such a man. But Timothy had to look to the future himself. The church will make progress when new leaders are trained. The dynamic church is a training ground where new leaders are formed. Timothy must pass on what he heard from Paul to reliable men. These men would be the ones with the character traits described in 1 Timothy chapter 3. These same men would on to teach others and so the baton of good leadership would be passed on. Is your church planning for the future? Who will take over when your present leaders retire, or die, move on?

Paul uses three illustrations to show how we can maintain our focus as we serve Christ. We must live like soldiers. We read in verse 3, "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus". The battle we are fighting is against the world the flesh and the devil. It isn't easy following the Lord. Many challenges face us as we seek to grow in holiness. We will deny ourselves so the God's work develops. We will do this because we want to please the Lord. Verse 4 says, "No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs-he want to please his commanding officer". Next, Paul mentions the athlete. He says in verse 5, "Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victors crown unless he competes according to the rules". The successful athlete keeps all the necessary rules of his sport to win. This demands discipline, sacrifice, and commitment. Can we give anything less as we serve the Lord? He is motivated by the fact that he will receive a prize at the end. Then Paul talks about the farmer. We read in verse 6, "The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops". Notice Christian service is hard work! The farmer must plough and sow regardless of the weather conditions. He is motivated by the fact that he will reap a harvest in due course. We must be patient and dedicated as we work for Jesus in the field of the world. The storms of persecution may arise but we must be faithful. God will use our work for him. The farmer works with nature

but can't control nature. So it is with us. We work with the Lord but can't control the Lord. He will accomplish his own purpose with our lives. He will do what pleases him. Our duty is to say, "Here I am send me". It's the duty of willingness and obedience alongside sacrifice.

Paul reminds us of the simplicity yet glory of the gospel. He says in verse 8, "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David". The key to you and me persevering in hardship for the gospel is the example of Jesus. He was raised from the dead which reminds us that He endured hardship even to the death of the cross. He knows our trials because he descended from David. He bore our human nature, and endured difficulties as a human being. We read in Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet without sin". When you feel the way is difficult and hard-remember Jesus!

Paul says in 2 Timothy 2 verse 8, "This is my gospel". This is the gospel that saves. It centres on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no other way to be saved but through faith in Jesus and what he has done for you on the cross.

This gospel brought suffering for Paul. It will be the same for all who follow Christ. Paul says in verses 8 and 9, "This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained". The suffering of the believer is never futile. Something is always accomplished when we suffer. No Christian suffers for his own sake only. Paul makes this point in verse 10. He says, "Therefore, I endure everything for the elect that they too may obtain salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory". When you take a bold stand for Christ and witness for him others will be saved. It might bring ridicule from some, but others will listen and believe. Also, when you suffer for Christ, other believers will be encouraged as they see your boldness and God's powerful supporting grace in your life. This will cause them to grow in their own salvation experience. In verses 11 to 13 Paul quotes from what appears to be an ancient early church hymn. It was called "The Song of the Martyrs". We read, "If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure we will also reign with him. If we disown him he will disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself". Trusting and following Jesus guarantees our future resurrection. We will reign with him in the new heavens and earth. No one who rejects Jesus will have any part in this. Christ will disown those who have chosen to refuse his grace and mercy. When we face hardship there may be times when we fail the Lord. But he will always remain

faithful to us. It's good to know that our salvation finally depends on our merciful saviour and not on us? The Lord cannot disown himself. He has promised to keep the believer and get him to heaven. He will keep his word. His promise is a promise founded on grace. Jesus said of believers in John chapter 10 verse 28, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand". It's this kind of promise he can't disown. To do so would be a denial of his own perfect character and integrity.

In verses 14 to 26 Paul gives us some further guidelines on how we can be focussed and live like a soldier, athlete and farmer. Don't forget all that you've been taught. We read in verse 14, "Keep reminding them of these things". Don't quarrel over empty arguments. Positively speak about the gospel, and don't be sidetracked with meaningless words that lead to ruin. We read in verse 14, "Warn them before God about quarrelling about words; it is of no value". It's important to handle God's word correctly. We read in verse 15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth". In the original Greek the words "correctly handles" translates a word that means "to cut straight". It was used of ploughing a straight furrow. So when you handle scripture you will not be sidetracked. You will stick closely to the key issues and central truths revealed in God's word. Paul mentions two men who failed in this, Hymenaeus and Philetus. We read in verse 18 that they, "wandered away from the truth. They say the resurrection had already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some". Sound doctrine saves lives! It keeps people from being swayed by every new fad and error that appears. The mark of a false teacher is their deviation from clear scripture teaching.

Paul says in verse 22, "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace". This will make you useful to the Master. All of these things will help you to be disciplined fruitful believers.

The Dynamic Church.

Studies in 1&2Timothy and Titus.

The Pastoral Letters.

A dynamic church shines brightly in a dark world. 2Timothy chapter 3 shows us the kind of world we live in and the way we should behave in it. We read in verse 1, "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days". The last days began with the coming of Jesus and his death and resurrection. We read in Hebrews chapter 1 verses 1 and 2, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many time and in various ways, but in these *last days* he has spoken to us by his Son".

In 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 2 to 9 we read a list of various types of sins. They were apparent in Paul's day. The sins listed here are to be found in every generation. Arguably, it can be said that they will be particularly apparent leading up to the return of Christ. In verse 2 we read, "People will be lovers of themselves". This is top of the list. This is because all other sins arise out of this one. People sin because they want to and choose to. Their attitude is I'll do what I want. Central to their thinking is love of themselves. The opposite of self love is to love God. Those who do love God avoid the sins listed here because they want to please him. The list shows the typical features of a world without any concern for God. Verse 2 goes on to say that people will be, "lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy". All of this means that people without Christ will pursue material things; they will have a self-centred arrogant proud attitude. They will argue that they've got what they have, and are where they are, solely because of their own ability. There will be a breakdown in family relationships, especially between parents and children. Society will be marked by the absence of thankfulness toward those who have been helpful. There will be total disregard for God and the things of God. People will be hedonistic.

Verse three continues the list. We read that people will be, "without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good". The picture here is that love will be lost. The original Greek word for love in this verse is the word for family love. Close family ties will become second to self interest. Husband and wife will pass as ships in the night and latchkey children will fend for themselves. The word "unforgiving"

means here “continual hate”. People are so full of hate that they refuse to be reconciled. This lies behind all family turmoil, national unrest, international wars and strife where one will not give way to another. People will slander others and tell all manner of lies about them. Many will go through life controlled by drugs, sex, and drink rather than exercise self control. Brutality will be common. It won’t be safe to walk the streets even in daylight. People will love the bad things and hate the good.

Verses 4 and 5 conclude this list. We read that many will be, “treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-having a form of godliness but denying its power”. This list tells us that people will be unprincipled. They’ll be carried along without thinking about the consequences of their selfish actions. They will live with a sense of self importance. Their main concern will be their own personal pleasure. Some will be religious. They’ll have a form of godliness. We can find people who can get along with religion because they appreciate religious tradition that’s been a part of their background. They appreciate church music. They like the traditional Easter and Christmas services. They admire religious art and architecture. But they have no powerful conversion experience, and oppose any idea of living under the authority of the Bible and Jesus Christ. Are you just religious? Do you have a real and powerful experience of being changed by the power of the gospel?

The Christian lifestyle is altogether different to that of the world. Paul lists those things that should characterise the believer. He presents himself as the example of this. We read in verses 10 and 11, “You however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, and sufferings”. These are the qualities produced through Christian conversion. The gospel does people good. It changes them and society for the better. How different the world will be if people displayed those characteristics! Timothy had seen the same characteristics in his mother and grandmother. We read in chapter 1 verse 5, “I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, now live in you also”. How does this godly lifestyle become a part of your life? We read in chapter 3 verses 14 to 17, “and from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”. These verses show us the importance of the

Bible in Christian experience. Most importantly, the Bible points to Jesus and show you how you can be saved from your sin. It points the way to forgiveness and reconciliation with God. The Bible is inspired by God. It comes from him. He breathed it out using human writers to communicate the words to us. Scripture is authoritative because when scripture speaks God speaks. The Bible demands our attention, confidence and response. It`s a very practical book.

Paul lists four benefits that the scriptures bring. It brings teaching so that you can know God`s will for your life, and how you can please him. It highlights sin in our life and rebukes us for it. It points out the right way for us to live. The scriptures correct us. Our thinking is faulty because of the influence of sin and it needs straightening out. We need to have our minds renewed. What we think is what we become. We need the mind of Christ duplicated in our mind. The Bible provides training in righteousness. The ideals of God are revealed. We learn what God expects and how to do it. When we apply the scriptures to our lives we have all we need to live the kind of life that pleases God. It will produce a different lifestyle from the world. It will enable us to be what Paul says in Philippians chapter 2 verses 15 and 16, “blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe, as you hold out the word of life”

The Dynamic Church.

Studies in 1&2 Timothy and Titus.

The Pastoral Letters.

We've arrived now at Chapter 4 of 2 Timothy. What is it that motivated Paul? Remember he is in a dark dismal prison. He was chained and breathing the stale air. How was he able to keep his spirit up, and write words of encouragement to Timothy? He says in verse 2, "preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction". The answer is that he had Christian optimism. His optimism was founded on the fact that God was with him, and that God would have the final say in world history. We read in verse 1, "In the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word". Paul knew God's presence. He experienced God's grace and strength. This helped him in this dark hour. God will come as judge. Christ will appear, and all the ungodly Kings and nations will stand before him. Better to be a Paul in the dungeon with Christ, than a Nero on the throne without him! The thought of God's promised presence, and the certainty of the second coming of Christ, kept Paul strong. Those who fall away do so because they have taken their eyes off the finishing line.

Timothy had a great responsibility. He needed to teach sound doctrine. Many false teachers were around. We read in verse 3, "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear". The mark of a false teacher is that he will tell people what they want to hear not what they need to hear. They pander to people's felt needs not their real needs. They don't faithfully preach the word, and they're selective in the scripture passages they use. Make sure that you know the Bible and that you teach the whole counsel of God's word. Paul further encourages Timothy in verse 5. He says, "Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry". Every now and then we have a Christian fad. Some new novel experience or teaching appears. They come then eventually die out. We need to be level headed. There's a great need for Christian discernment. Not all that is said and done in the name of Christ is biblically based. Test all things by the word of God.

Hardship will come to you as you are faithful to God and his word. It's part of the package. An evangelist is one who preaches good news of the gospel. We are not all called to work as an evangelist. We are all called to tell people the good news of the gospel. Have you told someone the good news today that they can know Jesus and have their sins forgiven? Church leaders should make sure that alongside their teaching ministry for believers, there's the challenge to the unsaved to repent and believe the gospel. This is doing the work of an evangelist. No part of the ministry should be left undone.

Paul's optimism extends to his view on his own death. He says in verse 6, "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure". Paul's view on dying wasn't that it was a defeat but an act of worship. The drink offering is connected to the burnt offering. It was poured out over it. It was the final part of the offering. The burnt offering typifies the believers total giving of himself to Christ. Paul had done this. His death was the final part of the offering. The total offering was an act of worship. Soon he would give his life for the gospel. His time drew near. Tradition tells us that Paul was beheaded. If we are called to lay down our physical lives for the Lord count it a privilege. He laid down his life for you. It's your final and complete last act of worship and dedication to the Lord. Paul refers to his death as "departure". This word translates an original word that was used for unyoking an animal from the plough so it could rest; of loosing the bonds of a prisoner to set him free; for a soldier who takes down his tent ready to move elsewhere. Death for the believer is leaving this world and entering into the eternal rest in glory. It's being set free from the bondage of this world and the presence of sin. Death is moving locations from this world to be with Christ which is much better. Are you fearful about dying? You can face death in peace when you know Jesus as your saviour and Lord. You can have the same outlook as Paul.

Paul was optimistic because beyond death he would receive a reward. We read in verse 8, "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing". Keep investing in heaven. Don't give up your efforts for God's kingdom. A crown of righteousness awaits you! Paul lists the qualifications of those who will get this crown. We read in verse 7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith". The original word translated "fought" means to "wrestle". You will be

faithful even though living for Jesus is a struggle. You will run with energy and focus until you reach the finishing line. You will not deviate from sound doctrine.

The dynamic church sees the need for fellowship and mutual support. In verses 9 to 22 Paul lists his friends. We see Paul the human being with all the same physical and emotional needs that we have. He longs for Timothy's company and his Christian fellowship. He says in verse 9, "Do your best to come to me quickly". He mentions various believers. Demas had forsaken him attracted by the world. Even dedicated believers who are involved in Christian work can be distracted by the allurements of the world. We need to be watchful at all times over our souls. Luke was there supporting him, and others, like Crescens, Titus and Tychicus had gone to other places to preach the word. Many had deserted him but he testifies to the fact that the Lord stood by him. You maybe let down by another believer but the Lord will never fail you. Paul requested his cloak and books. Winter was getting close and the prison would be cold. The books would help in his studies. The parchments he mentions may well be legal documents he needed in readiness for his defence before Nero. Although we believe God is with us, we need to make normal preparations for whatever lies ahead of us.

Be optimistic as you serve the Lord, you're on the winning side. The world will see it one day when our saviour appears. Keep longing for his appearing. In the light of it keep fighting the good fight, running the race set before you, and preaching the word entrusted to you.

The Dynamic Church.

Studies in 1&2 Timothy and Titus.

The Pastoral Letters.

The last of the Pastoral letters is Paul's letter to Titus. Today we begin our study of chapter 1.

We start with a brief introduction. The letter was written around 63 AD. Like his first letter to Timothy, it was written after Paul's release from house arrest where we leave him at the end of the book of Acts. The letter was probably written from Corinth. Paul moved on to Nicopolis and waited for Titus there. Titus was in Crete. It's likely that He wanted Titus to join him on his journey to Spain. Paul arranged for someone to relieve him of his duties. We read in chapter 3 verse 12, "As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis". Titus became a Christian through Paul's preaching. We read in chapter 1 verse 4, "To Titus, my true son in our common faith". Paul was Titus' spiritual father. Titus was born again as he heard Paul preach the gospel. He was very useful in the service of the Lord. We read in 2 Corinthians 8 verse 6, "So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring to completion this act of grace on your part". He was as concerned for the believers Paul was. We read in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 23, "As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you". Again, in chapter 12 verse 18, Paul says this about Titus, "I urged Titus to go to you... did we not act in the same spirit and follow the same course?"

Titus had the same position and ministry as Timothy. He wasn't appointed as the Pastor of a particular Church in Crete. His ministry was to churches in every town. He was an apostolic delegate. He'd been sent to Crete to consolidate the Church throughout the Island. We read in Titus chapter 1 verse 5, "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town". The Church in Crete had been founded by believing Jews who had been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. We read in Acts chapter 2 verse 11 that amongst the crowd were, "Jews and converts to Judaism, *Cretans*, and Arabs". Titus's main task was to organise the Church in Crete, and get it on a good solid foundation.

The letter begins with a reference to Paul himself. He describes himself in verse 1. We read, "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ". The original Greek word

translated “servant” means a slave. This shows that Paul totally yielded himself to Jesus Christ. Our devotion to Christ should be the same. He deserves our all because he gave his all for us. C.T. Studd said, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him”. Paul is an apostle. The word means “one that is sent on a mission”. Paul was God’s envoy and ambassador. We can’t be an apostle in the same way as Paul, but we can act as Christ’s ambassadors in the world, speaking for him, and representing him to those around us. His ministry is toward the elect. He says in verse 1, “for the faith of God’s elect”. He wants to bring people to faith and strengthen those who have come to faith. His aim in encouraging Titus is stated at the end of verse 1. He says that he wants people to come to, “the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness”. Faith and knowledge are the main ingredients that lead to godly living. Without faith there can be no spiritual life. Without knowledge there can be no light, we remain in darkness. With both we have understanding that leads to application and godliness. This knowledge is based on truth and founded on the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ. We read in verse 2, “a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life”. It’s this future hope that will motivate us to grow in faith and knowledge and promote godly living. John says in 1 John chapter 3 verse 3, “Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure”.

Titus’ challenge is found in verse 5. We read, “Appoint Elders in every city as I directed you”. Paul uses the word “Elders” here rather than the word “overseer” he used in 1 Timothy chapter 3. Elder, overseer and Pastor (or Shepherd) refers to the same office. Overseer and Pastor describe the function of the office. It’s what spiritual leaders do. They oversee the direction and wellbeing of the believers. The word Elder speaks of maturity. This maturity isn’t necessarily in years but in spiritual maturity, although it’s true to say that generally wisdom does come with years. Paul uses the word “Elders” because he knows that the congregation for the most part aren’t mature spiritually. Titus needs to make his choice of leaders carefully. Mature spiritual sound leadership is a must for any congregation. A dynamic church will have these sorts of men in leadership positions. Make sure you appoint leaders for your church who have depth of understanding in the scriptures. The qualifications that Paul lists for the Elder in verse 6 to 9 are very similar to those found in 1 Timothy chapter 3. Essentially they must be men of godly character. A significant qualification is found in verse 9, “He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who

oppose it". The reason for this is given in verse 10, "For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group...teaching things they ought not to teach". The church was under threat by false teaching and the only remedy was to counteract it with the truth of God`s word. There are many heresies around today and the antidote is exactly the same. Only a good sound grasp of doctrine will save you and your congregation from the pollution of false doctrine. Be people of the word. Study it well. False teachers are liars. Paul quotes a well known Cretan poet. We read in verse 12, "Even one of their own poets has said, `Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons". This was written by Epimenides in 600 BC when the Cretan civilisation had deteriorated. The saying was picked up by writers of subsequent generations. It became a proverb. Paul picks up the saying and applies it to the false teachers in Crete who fit this description. He`s showing that they are liars. He isn`t suggesting that all Cretans are like that in his day. The people of Crete on the whole are no better and no worse than any other people. The problem is one of the heart. The false teachers are not true Christians. He says in verse 15, "To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure". This being the case we are told in verse 13 how we should respond to them. We read, "Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith". This is because false knowledge doesn`t lead to godliness but to disobedience, corrupted minds, hearts, and consciences. Our goal should be the restoration of those who`ve gone astray.

Be sound in the faith. If what you believe doesn`t make you more godly, and more like Jesus, then there`s something wrong.

The Dynamic Church.

Studies in 1&2 Timothy and Titus.

The Pastoral Letters.

In Chapter 1 of Titus we saw that truth and sound doctrine lead to godliness. False teaching should be exposed by the Elders whose job it is to shepherd and protect the flock. But how will this godliness show itself? Titus chapter 2 answers that question. The key verse in this chapter is verse 10. We read, "In every way they will make the teaching about God and our Saviour attractive". The dynamic church is attractive to the outsider. Truth leads to godliness, and godliness is something that can be seen outworked. Godliness isn't a vague invisible thing, it shows itself in the way we live from day to day. Sound doctrine that is mere head knowledge is useless. It's ugly. But sound doctrine that is put into practice is attractive. We read in verse 1, "You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine". What follows isn't a list of theological propositions, but down to earth teaching on how to live your life. It deals with relationships.

In the 1960s Marshall McLuhan invented the phrase, "The medium is the message". The message itself is important. The message we bring is the life changing gospel. Those who preach it must show its relevance and power demonstrated in their own lives. They become the medium of the message. It will have appeal as people see the observable benefits of following Christ lived out before them in every Christian believer. It's often here we fail- life doesn't measure up to lip. A man was led to Christ by his Christian friend. He told him what had impacted him and led him to faith. He said, "You walk the walk and talk the talk. But your walk talks more than your talk talks"!

In verses 2 to 10 Paul shows that the responsibility to live attractive lives for Christ is for all ages and both sexes in the Church. We see the marks of a healthy church. It's made up of spiritually mature older men. Verse 2 says, "Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance". We often hear that we must focus on the youth in our church because they are the church of tomorrow. Youth ministry is very important. But older men have something to give to church life. Someone once called the senior believers in church, "the churches hidden assets"! The word "temperate" means "sober and discreet". What a blessing spiritually wise older men are in the fellowship. Those men who know their Bible, and are sound in faith,

love and endurance. Men like this will enrich the church as they share their understanding of God's word which has been seasoned over the years. In the same way older women have a vital ministry. We read in verse 3, "Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husband and children". The word "teach" means "to train by making sober minded". By their word and example older women are able to help the younger women to think correctly about life and their responsibilities. They travelled that road before them. They can show them how to live as a Christian wife and influence the home. The younger women must respond positively to this. Don't send the older members of your church out to pasture. They have wisdom and gifts worth their weight in gold! If you are in church leadership find ways that you can mobilise your gifted seniors for service. Young people should respect the older members in the church. How many of you can look back to the early days as a believer and how much you were helped by an older Christian?

The youth of the Church have a big responsibility to live in a way that makes the gospel appealing. We read in verse 6, "Similarly, encourage the young men to be self controlled". Young people are inclined to try everything and go to excess. Everything of the world is new exciting, and attractive to them. But now they have been saved. They must control their appetites and desires. They must strive for holiness. If you're a young person listening today avoid anything that will cause the gospel to be discredited. You might ask, "How then should I live. What should I try to develop"? The answer is found in verse 7. Timothy is a young man himself. So Paul tells him to be an example to the young men in the church. We read, "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned". There we have the standard expected of young people. Give your best youthful years in the service of Jesus. Don't waste your time in the worthless activities of the world. Don't follow the gang. Follow Jesus. Also, Slaves must please their masters. They mustn't be insubordinate. They mustn't steal from them. Paul says in verse 10, "to show that they can be fully trusted". As a Christian employee you mustn't take anything from your workplace that doesn't belong to you. You shouldn't steal your employers time by wasting it. Throughout this chapter the emphasis is on sanity, self control, being wise, modesty and good sense. We preach the gospel just as much by the way we live. We will attract people to

it because they will see in our behaviour that it's truly a power for good. If they see unspiritual behaviour it will be a turn off and it will discredit the gospel. The way we live our lives in the world must enhance the message we preach.

God has saved you by his grace to be his special people. You're called to have a different attitude to life. You're called to live in a different way. You're called to display the beauty of grace in your lives. Grace is the foundation on which we build our lives. We read in verses 11 and 12, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say `no` to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age". Grace changes people. Verse 14 says this about Jesus, "who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good". As a child of God's grace you will reflect the grace of God in your life. You'll avoid the wrong and do the right. If that desire isn't in your heart then it's certain that you haven't experienced the grace of God in Christ. God's people say `no` to those things that don't conform to godliness. We will also be motivated to live that kind of life because we know the Lord is coming again. We read in verse 13, "While we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ".

How will the Lord find you when he comes? Will you be declaring the beauty of his grace?

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We now reach the final chapter of Titus, and of the three pastoral letters. In this third chapter Paul continues the theme he dealt with at the end of chapter 2. He shows us how to live in a way that makes the gospel attractive. Christians should be good citizens. We read in verse 1, "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, and to be ready to do whatever is good". The pagan Cretans were often rebellious against the government. Christians should be law abiding citizens. The last phrase of that verse, "ready to do whatever is good", carries the idea of cooperating in those matters that involve the whole community. We can become insulated as we meet in our churches. There's the danger of the "holy huddle"! We must always be mindful of the needs and problems our community faces. There are many people living near your church who are having problems in their marriage, family or in other circumstances. Are you relating to the community where the Lord has placed you? The community should know you because of the good and helpful things you do for them. Paul goes on to say in verse 2, "to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility towards all men". What a difference this would make in a society filled with lawlessness, violence, and arrogance. We are to be known as peacemakers, bringing healing and harmony to the community and the nation.

Paul gives us a good reason why we should live like this. It's because God has saved us from our sin. We're reminded of what we were in verse 3. We read, "At one time we were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures". We all acted like the unsaved in the past. Then God opened our eyes to see the truth in Christ. He removed our sin and guilt. We read of the process in verses 4 to 7, "But when the kindness and love of God our saviour appeared, he saved us not because of righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy". Our salvation is from God. He initiated it. Our good deeds had nothing to do with it. He goes on to say, "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour". God saved us through the new birth. This washing isn't water baptism. We are baptised after we are saved, not to make us saved. It shows that we are

born again through the word of God, or the message of the gospel. Scripture is likened to the cleansing effect water. Jesus said in John 15 verse 3, “you are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you”. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring us to conviction of sin. We repent and turn in faith to Christ and our sin is cleansed. We receive the Holy Spirit who renews our life and makes us a new creation in Christ Jesus. It’s all because of Jesus and what he did for us on the cross. We read in verse 7, “so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life”. When our sin is washed away we are justified. This means we have a new standing before God, and he sees us as if we have never sinned. We are righteous in his sight. Our response then ought to be grateful thanks and a willingness to do all he asks. Paul says in verse 8, “this is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone”. Peter puts it like this in 1 Peter 2 verse 9, “But you are a chosen people, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”. Living a holy life where God has placed you brings him glory. Holiness should never be detached from everyday living. People need to see what God is like and what he can do in their lives. They will only see it in you and me. We declare his character as he lives in and through us. They feel the impact through the deeds we do in Christ’s name. John Wesley said, “Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can”. Paul underlines this again in verse 14. We read, “Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives”. That is good citizenship. A preacher said to his congregation, “We’re going out to preach the good news”. The congregation happily followed him. He took them through the main streets of the city, he turned down the many side streets, and then they walked out to an outlying village. They then went back to the church taking the longest route. Some of the congregation said, “Why have you brought us back? You said we were going out to preach”. “Ahh”, said the preacher, “we have preached. We were preaching while we were walking. We have been seen by many; our behaviour has been closely watched. It’s of no use to walk anywhere to preach unless we preach everywhere we walk”.

The last part of chapter three refers to some people who were unhelpful and others who were helpful. Some people like to argue about things that don’t really matter. They

argue over issues that are of no value to spiritual growth. We read in verse 9, “but avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because they are unprofitable and useless”. Be sure that you are focussed on what matters, which is making known the gospel and living it out before a needy world. Some people bring division into the church. They distract the church from its main objective of bringing glory to God through godly living and unity. Verses 10 and 11 tell us how to respond to them. We read, “warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self condemned”. If someone is divisive try to show them the truth from God`s word. They may see their sin and turn from it. If they don`t, and continue to preach false doctrine, they can`t remain in fellowship. Their influence is destructive to the sound witness and work of the rest of the church.

Paul mentions those who have been helpful to him in the work. In verses 12 and 13 he mentions Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas and Appolos. These were co-workers with Paul and a great support to him. They were more of a help than a hindrance. These are the kind of people we need in our churches, men and women who are faithful to the Lord and the gospel. Men and women who help the work of the Lord along. People like that make the church dynamic.

Our studies in the pastoral letters come to a close. I trust you`ve been blest, encouraged and challenged. May we all contribute to the local church where God has placed us and make it dynamic for Christ.

