

Insights from 1 Timothy 1:1-2

By Dave DeWitt

Verse 1, Paul—This was his Gentile name. He was born as Saul, a Jewish Roman citizen (Acts 22:27-28).

an apostle of Christ Jesus—We should remember 4 things about the apostle Paul:

- (1) As an apostle Paul is one who is sent by Jesus Christ personally. But
- (2) Paul was not one of *the twelve* (1 Corinthians 15:5-8) and he was not God's replacement for Judas (Acts 1:26).
- (3) He was personally called by Jesus to be an apostle, especially to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).
- (4) Apostles were the only people with authority in the church and Paul was one of them ... *God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone* (Ephesians 2:20).

The prophets were people who spoke and wrote the Word of God, and they were in the church until the writing of Revelation (22:18). *I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy [not just future prophecy but revelation] of this book [the book of Revelation, the last book written]: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book.* The authority of the apostles and revelation of the NT prophets is only replaced today by the New Testament they left us.

according to the commandment of God our Savior—Although the phrase *God our Savior* is more common in the Old Testament (Psalms 106:21; Isaiah 45:21), Paul also used it regularly (1 Timothy 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). The point is, God the Father is the source of salvation.

and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope—Hope is desired expectation. We have desires we do not expect to come true and we have expectations we do not desire, but hope is a desire, which we have an expectation of fulfillment. I expect to pay my taxes but I don't desire it. I desire to fly a DC-3, but I hope to fly my Piper Cub.

An Application—Christianity is the religion of the apostles. The apostles are the ones who tell us about Jesus (Acts 1:8). The apostles did not write every book of the New Testament (Mark, Luke, James and Jude were not apostles), but they were prophets in that they inerrantly recorded the Word of God and the apostles sanctioned them as Scripture. The apostles were the authors and authorities of the New Testament church (1 John 4:6) and the ones sanctioning the authority of the Old Testament (2 Timothy 3:16). Why did Paul start this personal letter to Timothy by mentioning his apostolic authority? Because apostolic authority is the foundation of the church. Since the apostles completed the Bible, we should understand the Bible as the only authority of the church today.

Verse 2, To Timothy, my true child—Probably not just referring to Timothy's salvation but his dedication to Pauline theology and a desire for discipleship (2 Timothy 2:2).

in the faith—This is the first of 19 times Paul used the word πιστις (*pistis*) for *faith* in 1 Timothy. The word πιστις (*pistis*) for *faith* is used 243 times in the NT, so it is crucial to understand faith.

A Theological Note—In general, faith is a decision to trust what we understand to be true. In the Bible, faith is a decision to trust the truth itself (the way things actually are). Faith is never an arbitrary choice. It is impossible to choose to believe something you do not understand to be true (like unicorns, leprechauns, or pink elephants). When we understand something to be true, trusting that understanding is inevitable.

Grace—is God's selective favor. The word is used some 100 times in Paul's epistles.

A Theological Note—Grace is a favor, therefore it is always unmerited. But it is also selective, not given to everyone but to those selected by God for some particular reason. Unlike the others before the Flood, *Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord* (Genesis 6:8 KJV). In a unique way, Jesus was *increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him* (Luke 2:20).

Mercy—Mercy is unmerited compassion. Whereas grace is getting a blessing we do not deserve, mercy is not getting the judgment we do deserve.

and peace—Peace is beneficial tranquility. It is not just living a restful, calm, or quite life, but one that is beneficial. A lazy person may have tranquility, but it is not beneficial.

from God the Father—A relationship with God as a father was not available in the Old Testament. This was introduced by Jesus (Matthew 6:9) and extended to us through salvation. We have the privilege of calling God our Father because God has brought us salvation (v. 1).

and Christ Jesus our Lord—This emphasizes Jesus as Lord of our lives as believers. The Lordship of Christ describes our experiential sanctification, not our positional salvation.