**BCM Bible Study - 3/16-17, 2022**

**1 Timothy 1:1-20**

The books of 1 & 2 Timothy are part of what has been dubbed the ‘Pastoral Epistles’, which also includes Titus. One of the reasons for this is the way that all three of them include such great theology and instruction for how to lead/pastor and establish a church well. Even with that in mind, 1 & 2 Timothy are filled with great practical, personal applications that will hopefully challenge and encourage our faith walks over the upcoming weeks.

Spend the first 10 or so minutes getting to know one another and what you would like to get out of the study, plus grow in over the next seven weeks.

Ice breaker question: Have you ever received advice from a mentor, discipler, etc. and how did that serve to nourish and challenge you?

Introduction: **Read 1 Timothy 1:1-2**

* What can we learn about the connection between Timothy and Paul from v. 2?
* These two letters to Timothy are Paul’s only letters with the greeting “Grace, **mercy**, and peace…” How does this further help you to understand their bond?
  + Why might Paul also extend mercy to his spiritual son?
  + “The added word *mercy* here carries the idea of God’s special care for a person in need. The Old Testament equivalent of this word (hesed) is used multiple times in the Psalms, with the idea of help in time of need.” (Hughes)

Paul’s Command for Timothy: **Read 1 Timothy 1:3-11**

* Verses 3-4 feature a command from Paul about avoiding false doctrines and other minefields of wrong/unhelpful theology. When have you noticed people or churches led astray by these?
  + How can we make sure that our focus is truly upon “advancing God’s work”?
  + **Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9** In what ways does this passage add to how you understand 1 Timothy 1:4? Which aspect of this kind of faith is most challenging to you?
* What can we learn about love from how Paul has associated it here with good theology and the correction of this false teaching in Ephesus?
* Paul seems to equate these three qualities (pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith) with signs of a healthy relationship with God. These seem to be hard areas to honestly self-evaluate. How do you perform an honest inventory of growth and expression of these three qualities in your life?
  + What can we do to make sure that this won’t turn into legalism for us?
  + This return to the law was not uncommon and part of its challenges are mentioned throughout many NT letters. Which false teachings in culture (secular or Christian) might have a similar potential to be a threat to our faith today?
* In Paul’s desire to have Timothy help correct the false doctrine that those in Ephesus were experiencing, he seems rather concerned with the character of the believers. How frequently do you associate your character and outward actions with your faith?
  + What are some areas of your overall character where you think you still need to grow?
* Who then is the law made for?
  + How might Paul’s description of the law change the way that those elders and others subscribing to it used it?

“Paul’s point is relentlessly clear: If you are going to proclaim the law in this dark, diseased world, do it as an entrance to preaching the gospel.” (Hughes)

God’s Mercy: **Read 1 Timothy 1:12-20**

* How do you most often express your gratitude to God?
  + What might the value be in us remembering all that God has forgiven us personally for?
* This is one of four trustworthy sayings found between the two letters to Timothy. How can we remind ourselves of Jesus’ centrality in this ‘trustworthy saying’?
  + While it might seem dramatic, Paul just recounted all that he had done against God and His working on earth through the Church.
  + Do you have trouble seeing yourself as a sinner? What might be steps you could take to help more accurately see all of the things for which God has forgiven you?
* Verse 16 is a beautiful example of how God’s grace can have such a wide-reaching impact.
  + Who are those people that you can’t forgive or have great difficulty forgiving? Which sins are most challenging to understand God forgiving?
  + **Read Acts 9:13-16 & 9:26-30** How did many in the church initially respond to Paul’s conversion?
  + What then does it look like for us to respond well to the work that God is doing in the lives of others?
* This section ends with Paul returning to speaking to Timothy on the purpose of this letter. How would Paul’s message serve to both encourage and challenge Timothy for the work that is ahead?
  + What can we learn about the connection between our faith and our morality from the emphasis here?

Challenge: One of the things which this first chapter of 1 Timothy has done is show how love and God’s grace ultimately impact every area of our lives. Keep a notecard, note on your phone, etc. over the next week going and mark down places where you observe that your following of Christ hasn’t been impacted.

**Extra Notes**

* Paul wrote 1 Timothy to Timothy (and the church there) in the early 60s AD.
* Each of the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) were written by Paul to that individual, yet also had much for the church there as well as for us now to learn.
* Acts 16:1 is the first mention of Timothy in the New Testament and describes how he joined Paul and Silas on their journey.
* Within Acts 20:13-38 we see Paul warn the Ephesian church of false teaching and how it can pervert things. Yet, here in 1 Timothy we see the negative effects of it upon the church.
* Verse 20 refers to a pretty hard situation that we do not have much information about. Yet, it seems like Paul separated Hymenaeus and Alexander from the safety of the church for their own good. In this way, they would no longer have the additional protection of a Christian community to bridge the gap of the separation which they had put between themselves and God. The hope was that this would “teach them not to blaspheme” and ultimately lead them to a deeper relationship with God.

This semester, we’ll be using commentaries by Kent Hughes and Donald Guthrie to aid in the writing of studies. So, if you see either of their names that is who that is referring to. If you’re interested in learning more about what they are saying, feel free to reach out to Nick!