

Timothy: A Valuable Servant of Christ

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Date: 21 August 2016

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[0:00] And turn in your Bibles to Acts 15 for our scripture reading. Acts 15, we'll start reading at verse 36. Where the last time we were in the book of Acts, we saw that again how God uses even disagreement between Paul and Barnabas to continue to build his kingdom, build his church.

And then we'll continue reading through chapter 16, verse 5. Sometime later, Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preach the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.

Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers, to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek.

[1:25] The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in faith and grew daily in numbers.

Let's hear the word preached. One of the great needs of the church of Jesus Christ has always been more workers.

More workers. So the church needs Sunday school teachers to teach our children or teachers to take a class on Wednesday night with our young ones.

Or we need workers in the nursery so that parents can sit and hear the word of God undisturbed for an hour. We need someone to clean the church or to help with this or that.

[2:29] We need workers who will give themselves to that hard work of prayer. That will gather together to pray and then workers to go and to tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

We need workers to get with other believers and to encourage them in the things of God, as we heard in the Sunday school hour. We need faithful men and women who will be able to meet with others and teach them to obey everything that Christ has commanded.

And to see new believers built up and become able to train others also. Yes, even the great head of the church has said to us, hasn't he, that the harvest is great and the workers are few.

So we have this great need. The church is always in need of workers. We have a great mission field, the whole world. And so, yes, it will ever have this need for workers.

So we need workers. Workers who are not so consumed with their own things that they neglect the things of Christ and his church, his kingdom, his will.

[3:43] Well, the exalted Lord Jesus is building his church today. That's the encouraging reality. But he has chosen to do it through human hands, human feet, human voices, human workers.

That's the way he builds his church in the world. Now, where does Jesus find such workers? How does he make them such?

This morning we get to see the Lord Jesus recruiting a worker, a worker named Timothy, who proved to be a most valuable servant of Christ.

Now, if we could have the first map. Yes, it's there already. After Paul and Barnabas had got back from their first missionary journey, which is what you see here.

They came this far and then they retraced their steps and went back to their home church in Antioch. And after they'd been in Antioch for a year or two, they said, let's go back. Paul says to Barnabas, let's go back and see how the brothers are doing.

[4:45] And you remember that Barnabas wanted to take his cousin John Mark along, just as they had done on the first missionary journey. And Paul did not think it would be wise to take him since he had deserted them the first time and had not gone into all, had not continued in the work with them.

And there was such a sharp disagreement over whether or not to take John Mark that Paul and Barnabas parted company. And so Barnabas took John Mark and they decided to come back here to Cyprus and to visit the brethren there.

Paul took Silas, a brother from the Jerusalem church, and they would trace their route back north, the land route to the north to come back to these churches that they had preached in on the first missionary journey.

So, as Charlie mentioned before in the reading of the scripture, there are now two gospel teams rather than one. As the Lord Jesus was able to work for good what the devil meant for evil.

So, the second missionary journey of Paul almost fizzled on the launch pad without ever even launching because of this disagreement. But due to Christ's determination to make his gospel known throughout the world, it succeeds now with two missionary teams.

[6:19] So, we're going to follow the second missionary journey now. And we're going to see Paul and Silas making their way on the northern route back here to these churches.

This is the region of Galatia. So, when we speak about the letter to the church in Galatia, these are the churches in this region that Paul would write that letter to.

Now, it was early on this journey that Paul found a replacement for John Mark. Remember, he wants three on the team. He had Paul and Barnabas and John Mark.

John Mark deserted. So, now we need a third. So, it's not enough just that there's Paul and Silas. He deems that we need a third member. And so, it's early on this journey that Paul finds a replacement for John Mark and the young man named Timothy.

And this new worker would prove to be one of the greatest blessings both in the life and the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Let's consider six points this morning about Timothy and learn lessons for our lives and for our church and for the greater kingdom of God.

[7:29] The first thing is his usefulness. His usefulness to Paul and to Christ's church. We find that Timothy was a dearly loved and highly esteemed servant and fellow worker with the Apostle Paul.

There was a special relationship between Paul and Timothy. He refers to Timothy in his first letter to him as my true son in the faith.

Paul didn't say that about everyone. But he said it of Timothy. My true son in the faith. And again, he writes or he speaks of him as Timothy, my son whom I love.

Now, just as a son owes his physical life to his father. So, under God, Timothy owed his spiritual life to Paul.

Because it was through Paul's preaching of the gospel that Timothy came to believe on Christ and received new life in Christ. And so, Paul could say of Timothy what he wrote about believers in Corinth.

[8:38] That although you have 10,000 guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the gospel.

In that sense, Timothy was a son. A dearly loved, true son of Paul. Because it was under Paul's preaching that he had come to spiritual life.

Now, he went from being a son, a new disciple, to becoming then an esteemed fellow worker with the apostle Paul.

The commentator Hendrickson says that none of Paul's companions is mentioned as often. And none are found with Paul more constantly as is Timothy.

So, signing off a letter, telling who the letter's from. It's often Paul and Timothy. Oh, he's there with him again. Wherever Paul was there, we see Timothy more than any other co-worker.

[9:43] And he had many. Also, whenever Paul had an important errand, he could send Timothy. And when he sent Timothy, it was with confidence.

Isn't it good to have a right-hand man in the business world? In any situation that you can... You need something done, and when you send him or her, you know it's going to get done.

That was Timothy. And so, on the third missionary journey, as they're going along, they come to Ephesus. And Paul says, boy, there's a lot to sort out here. He left Timothy in Ephesus to put things in order and to establish that church more firmly on Christ.

And we also have two books of the Bible that bear his name, don't we? The first and second letters to Timothy. These are precious letters that speak about the church and its order and its ministry and its mission and its pastors and deacons.

Your pastors are often found reading those two letters together and praying over them. These are precious words that were written to Timothy from Paul.

[10:52] And just as Paul had passed the baton on to Timothy, the baton of the gospel, so he charges Timothy to find other faithful men that he can pass the gospel on to, who will themselves be able and faithful to teach others also.

And then we have that touching note that when Paul is in prison, he's waiting the executioner's sword. There he writes a letter to Timothy.

Second letter to Timothy. It's the last words we have from this apostle, this great apostle. And in the last chapter, he says to Timothy, do your best to come quickly to me.

Do your best to come to me quickly. Do you read anything in that? Do you see the heart of a man that wants to be with Timothy? And then again later in the same chapter, do your best to get here before winter.

So Timothy was a highly valued servant of Christ that Paul regarded as a wonderful, beloved son and fellow worker.

[12:04] But there's no higher praise for Timothy from the lips of Paul than what we find in Philippians chapter 2, where Paul says, I hope to send Timothy to you shortly.

I have none like him. I have no one like him who takes a genuine interest in your welfare for everyone seeks out their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

But you know that Timothy has proved himself because as a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel. Chapter 2 and verse 20 to 22. Now that's high praise.

I have no one else like him. What was it that distinguished Timothy from the rest of the pack? Well, it was the fact of his genuine interest in the welfare of others.

He really cared about people. And supremely so, he cared about the interest of Jesus Christ. What matters to Jesus?

[13:12] Ruled in this man. What are the needs of others? That was put above himself. Now, everyone else seemed to be so wrapped up in their own interests that it would bleed through one way or another.

But not Timothy. There's none like him on this score. He's all about the interests of others and supremely the interests of Jesus Christ. Now we say, where do you get a servant like that? Where do you recruit a man like that? Well, where did Jesus find him? Well, he found him a lost sinner just like everyone else. Pursuing himself.

He was as self-absorbed as anyone else. That's how we come from the womb. It's all about me. And we go our own way. That was Timothy. Oh, but Christ's love and Christ's grace and Christ's gospel changed this man.

Where did he get such a spirit of interest in others? Well, he got it by drinking more deeply of the spirit of Jesus than anyone else did.

[14:19] Because you remember in Philippians chapter 2, earlier Paul had said about this Jesus that he who was God did not count that as something to be grasped.

He who had all the glory and splendor of heaven didn't just say, Well, I'm concerned about my interests. I'm going to stay here. Yes, I see those people. Those people who were made for us, but who have rebelled against us and are now on their way to hell.

But I don't care about their interests. I'm going to just stay here. No, he didn't do that, Paul says. Rather, he came. He lowered himself. He stooped.

He condescended to become a human being. He who is God became a man and was found in the likeness of a servant. This is the ultimate servant of the Lord now.

He will stoop so low to serve his Lord and God. And how low will he stoop? Well, he will stoop to do the work of a servant. He will stoop to be obedient to the Father's every wish.

[15:22] He will obey even unto death. And yes, even the death of the cross. And here's Timothy.

And he heard of this Savior and he put his trust in him. And that same spirit that dwelt so fully in Jesus Christ was the spirit that motivated him to no longer live for himself.

To consider others as better than himself. To not be concerned about his own interests, but about the interests of others. And supremely so of Jesus Christ.

All that to say, Timothy was a rare find. An extraordinary helper to the Apostle Paul.

Well, that's his usefulness then. Wow, this guy was useful to Paul and to the kingdom of Christ because of what Christ had done in him and for him.

[16 : 22] Well, secondly, his location. Where did Paul find this worker? Verse 1 tells us he came to Derbe. You see that on the map? That was the first place they came to.

And then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived. Now, Lystra was the pagan city that Paul had visited on his first missionary journey. And when he healed a crippled man who had been crippled from birth, the city, again, pagan, worshipping other gods, they thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods that had come down to earth because they had the power of the gods to heal this man.

And so they're ready to sacrifice. The priest is coming out. The local priest to their deities is coming out and he's got the bull. He's ready to sacrifice them to Paul and Barnabas. And they barely could stop them from worshipping them as gods.

And then the Jews, the Jews from Iconium and Antioch came down to Lystra and they won the crowd over. And instead of worshipping Paul and Barnabas, they now hated them and wanted them dead.

Indeed, they stoned Paul. And when they had thrown enough stones to appear to have pounded the life out of him, they drug him outside of the city and left him there for dead, thinking him dead.

[17 : 42] That's what we think of you and your gospel and your savior. We don't want it. You're out of here. You're out of our city. Well, that was Lystra, not a friendly environment for Christians.

But nevertheless, it's the home of a disciple named Timothy. Jesus Christ can raise up disciples and workers in the most unlikely of places. There were even some here in Lystra that had responded in repentance and faith when Paul preached the gospel in this place.

And indeed, these disciples had gathered around Paul's limp body as he laid there, having just been stoned. And as they're watching him, suddenly and miraculously, he gets up and he goes back into the city.

And the next day, he's off to Derbe to preach the gospel there. Was Timothy in that group looking at the stoned apostle that day? Very likely he was.

Must have made an impression upon him. Indeed, later on, Paul can write to him and say to him, you know all about my teaching and my way of life.

[18 : 55] You know all about my persecutions and my sufferings. You know what things happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, and in Lystra. You know what happened to me in Lystra, i.e. stoned and left for dead.

Yes, Timothy knew all about it. So here, in this pagan city, a city dangerous for disciples of Jesus, is found this disciple, Timothy.

And he became, under Paul's preaching, a follower of Christ. You see, his earlier mission, he had believed the gospel of Christ.

And so let's learn from his location that disciples can be made and thrive in places that are unfriendly to Christians. I believe the record in heaven will show that there are some of the most precious workers in the kingdom of Christ that have been raised up in nations that are oppressive and most antagonistic and most anti-Christ, like most against Jesus.

There, in those nations, Jesus is saving and using people to build his church. Timothy, his location. Thirdly, his family.

[20 : 14] What do we know about his family? Well, verse 1 tells us his mother was a Jewess and a believer, but his father was a Greek. And again, it's Greek full stop, period.

Not, not his mother was a Jewess and a believer and his father was a Greek and a believer. What do we learn from that? We learn that though his mother was a believing Jew, his father was an unbelieving Greek, a pagan.

In other words, Timothy did not have an ideal home in which to grow up, in which both parents were believers. No, he came from a spiritually divided home. Mother, a Jewess, a devout follower of the Jewish religion who herself had come to believe probably on Paul's first missionary journey when

she first heard of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and put her trust in him.

And here's this mother. She's, her name is Eunice, we learn in one of the letters to Timothy. And the father, he's, he's a Gentile, he's a pagan, and he's not a believer.

And, and we also learned that Timothy had a grandmother named Lois, and she too was a Jewish believer. And so his mother and grandmother were faithful Jews teaching the Old Testament scriptures to their son, to Timothy from infancy.

[21 : 44] Truths that were able to make him wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, Paul could write later of Timothy. Because that's exactly what happened.

As, as mother and grandmother taught him about the coming Messiah, God is going to say, send a Savior to save us. We must put our trust in him.

He's coming. Paul comes to town and says, I tell you from the scriptures that that coming Messiah has come. His name is Jesus of Nazareth.

He is the only mediator between God and man. He's the only way to come to God, to be right with God. And mother and grandmother put their trust in that Savior, Jesus, as did Timothy as well.

But I say, how little did this mother and grandmother realize as they taught little Timmy the Old Testament scriptures that one day he would hear the message of this Christ, not as one who is coming, but as one who has come, and would put his trust in that Savior and then go on to be one of the greatest servants in the church of Jesus Christ, furthering the kingdom of Messiah.

[22 : 58] How little mother and grandmother knew that that would be the outcome. And Timothy was highly useful to Paul's missionary team precisely because of his extensive training in the Old Testament scriptures which he got from the seminary of mother and grandmother.

That made him eminently useful to Paul's missionary team because what did Paul do? In every place where he came to town, if there was a synagogue of Jews there, he would go there first and do what?

He would prove from the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is that Messiah Savior. He's here. Now trust him. And you see how Timothy trained up from infancy on the Old Testament scriptures was now perfectly suited to that task to point others who understood the Old Testament scriptures, who had the Old Testament scriptures to how Jesus is that Messiah who was promised to come.

Well, it was his upbringing in the home that prepared him for this work. And I say there's enough encouragement in that to encourage every mother and grandmother, every parent and grandparent, every Sunday school and Wednesday night teacher of children at the church.

to make the most of your opportunity to plant the seeds of biblical truth in the children under your care. You might have a Timothy listening to you.

[24 : 38] Lois and Eunice did. And so our homes and our classes here at the church are to be nurseries that supply workers for Christ's kingdom.

Let's not neglect the potential army for Jesus that is right here under our noses in our children. The children. Let the little children come to me, Jesus says.

Will you bring them to Jesus? You urge them to Jesus. You pray for them. Pray them to Jesus.

Bring your children to the teachings and the lessons that have been prayerfully considered and prepared for them and teach them at home.

What a powerful one-two punch to have the teachings that the child receives in the home reinforced by other adults at the church.

Well, what children are hearing the word of God from you? May the Lord help us to be faithful. God works in less than ideal home situations. Timothy didn't have the example of a godly father set before him.

[25 : 49] That didn't make his mom just sit back and say, I guess it's a lost cause because he's going to look at his dad and learn from him. No, it made her work all the more diligently in setting before him the word of the living God.

And God blessed her efforts by saving her son and equipping him for useful service in the kingdom of Christ. Well, that's his family. What about his reputation?

What about his reputation? Well, he's a young man. And even though he's a young man, Timothy already had a good name among believers. You notice that in verse 2. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

He had a good reputation not only among the believers there in Lystra where he lived, but also 8 to 10 miles away in Iconium in the church there.

You see, the word travels. He was known in the whole region and they spoke well of him. And there were solid reasons for doing so. The wise man says in Proverbs 22.1, a good name is more desirable than great riches.

[27:00] To be esteemed is better than gold and silver. Ecclesiastes says a good name is better than fine perfume. Well, whatever you compare it to, a good name is better than those fine things of earth.

And Timothy had it. He had that good name. Not the name Timothy itself, but what people thought when they heard that name Timothy.

That's the good name he had. So that when his name came up in conversation, the mothers would say, Oh, now there's a fine young man, the kind I'd like my daughters to marry.

And dads were heard saying, Wouldn't I be proud to have my son grow up to be like that godly young man, Timothy. He's a good example to my boys.

And someone else chimes in, Yes, he's the real deal. He's the genuine article this Timothy is. You see, they spoke well of him. He had a good name. Let me ask you young people, how do you get a good name?

[28:01] How do you get a good name? How do you get a good reputation? Well, you can't buy it. No, you get it the old fashioned way. You earn it. One deed at a time.

It's starting to build. What you did yesterday, the day before, what you'll do today and tomorrow. It's that consistency of character. It's your life that is creating a reputation.

You have no one to blame for a bad reputation but yourself. You're building it, you see. To live is to build your name. What kind of name are you building? Paul told Timothy, don't let anybody look down on you because of your young age, but rather set an example for all the believers.

If you don't want people to dismiss you and your word is nothing, then you be one who sets a high standard, indeed sets an example for the believer in all these different ways.

First of all, in your speech. So I ask you young people, what's coming out of your mouth? Is it always the truth? Is it always edifying to those that hear it around you?

[29:12] Does it build up? Does it encourage? Is it self-controlled? Is it seasoned with grace? Are you an example in speech to others? How about in life?

Does your life follow the trajectory and pattern of Christ? Are you putting your feet in the footprints of Christ? A life that speaks well of you.

What about your love? You seek the good of others or are you just all about yourself? That's the way we come into the world, all about ourselves. But no, Timothy, love, set an example in love and in faith.

Set an example in faith. Are you trusting in Christ? Are you trusting in those things that he said in his word that you can't see but faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see.

An example in faith, an example in purity. So there's not even a hint of sexual immorality with you. Is that the reputation out on your name?

[30:12] That you bounce your eyes off of things and places and people and parts of people that they have no business being. That you are an example to the church in your purity.

Well, Timothy, yes, he was an example. Yes, he had a good name in the congregations, both in Lystra and up in Iconium. That tells me he was involved in the life of the church.

When this young man led in prayer, you couldn't help but see that he had a relationship with the living God. He knew God. He knew Jesus Christ. He knew God the Father. He knew God the Holy Spirit.

You couldn't hear him pray without knowing that he trusted in his promises, that he was hungry and thirsty for God, for his righteousness, his kingdom. You couldn't hear him pray without seeing that he sought first the kingdom of God.

He was most concerned about his name, his kingdom, his will. And when he preached or taught, for he probably had already begun doing so, the church found him to have a good grasp on the Bible.

[31:20] And again, no surprise, he learned it since infancy. But not just a grasp on Bible facts, he was a man of one book, but he also knew how to teach it in a way that the people of God were edified, they were built up in their faith.

And they came away saying, I was made to see my Savior in a new light this morning. I was drawn to the Lord Jesus. I was convicted of some sin in my life.

I was corrected. I was rebuked. I was instructed as Timothy opened the word of God to me. Yes, he had a good name and was spoken well of.

And so Paul's wanting another worker to come along and join the team. Not just someone who would say the right things, but someone whose life would command Jesus Christ to the world. Well, this was Timothy. The word was out on Timothy. He's faithful at his post. Faithful in little things, faithful in large things. And Timothy is chosen then. If you've been faithful in little, you'll be given much.

[32 : 30] And he becomes a fellow worker with the apostle Paul. Well, Timothy agreed to go with Paul and Silas. That indeed says something about his character in itself.

He's willing to write off whatever plans he had for himself as a young man and to go risk his life, his all, for Jesus Christ. Well, what about his circumcision?

That's the fifth point, his circumcision. Paul wanted, verse 3 says, Paul wanted him to take, wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Now, you remember it was Paul's custom, wherever he went, if there was a Jewish synagogue, to go there first and to convince them from the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. But here's Timothy, and everyone in that region, okay, everyone in that region knows that he is the uncircumcised son of a pagan Greek father.

That fact alone would slam the doors for ministry to the Jews right in the face of Timothy. He's not going to get far as an uncircumcised pagan, not uncircumcised pagan, as uncircumcised son of a pagan Gentile.

[33 : 59] Jews, not many Jews would open their doors, their homes to him. They would view him as unclean. And indeed, the synagogue would not be a place where he could preach as one uncircumcised.

Therefore, to remove this stumbling block from ministering to the Jews, Paul had Timothy circumcised. Now at first glance, this might seem to be a compromise with Paul's earlier practice. We might think, is Paul being inconsistent here? I mean, here he is circumcising Timothy. When he stood so strongly against circumcising Gentiles, earlier, you remember when some Jews came from Jerusalem up to Antioch and told them, told these Gentile believers who had trusted in Jesus and who were rejoicing in their newfound faith and newfound salvation and relationship with the living Christ, they told them, unless you're circumcised, you can't be saved.

Oh, we're happy for you, but you're not there yet. You've got to first be circumcised. You've got to have this physical thing done on your body in order to be saved. You remember what Paul and Barnabas did?

They sharply disagreed. They planted their feet and said, no way. These guys are as much fellow believers as we Jews are.

[35 : 21] They've not been circumcised, but they have trusted in the same Savior. They have received the same Holy Spirit. Paul and Barnabas would not budge on the matter. In fact, they said, this is so important.

We're going down to Jerusalem and to discuss it with the living apostles of Jesus. Those that Jesus had promised would be given such a fullness of the Spirit as to guide the church in the mind of Christ.

Let's go down to the elders and apostles at Jerusalem about this matter. And you remember the council that was held in chapter 15. And what they agreed upon, they determined that no, Gentiles do not have to be circumcised.

Now, in that situation, Paul and Barnabas would not budge. They had taken Timothy, another Gentile, from this same region and had gone down to Jerusalem.

And in Galatians chapter 2, they tell about, Paul writes about taking Titus, the uncircumcised Titus, down to Jerusalem. And some Jews there tried to have Titus circumcised.

[36 : 34] He must be circumcised in order to be saved. And it's as if Paul said, over my dead body. Listen to how he put it. He said, some false brothers have infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

He calls them false brothers. We've infiltrated trying to steal our liberty in Christ. And he says, we did not give in to them for a moment. Why, Paul?

Why wouldn't you let Titus be circumcised in that circumstance? So that the gospel, the truth of the gospel might remain with you. If Titus would have been circumcised because these Jews were saying you have to be circumcised to be saved, well, you would have lost the whole gospel of Jesus.

The gospel would have meant nothing to you because Jesus is no savior unless you're trusting in him alone. And if you're trusting in him plus your circumcision, he is of no value. You've lost the gospel.

You see, Paul identified it as a Jesus plus gospel, Jesus plus circumcision. And that gospel can save no one. So Paul would fight tooth and nail to maintain that salvation comes by faith in Jesus alone.

[37 : 47] what he has done, not on what we do, be it circumcision, repent, whatever else you want to add to the list. No, it's merited by the work of Jesus Christ alone.

Well, he stood for that principle. But you see, this situation is entirely different. No one here, Paul is not saying, Timothy, you need to be circumcised in order to be saved.

Nor is he teaching the people in the synagogue. You know, Timothy, we found him believing in Jesus, but we've now circumcised him because, you know, he really wasn't saved until he was. No, there was nothing. The gospel was not at stake here. It was rather a matter of removing a barrier for Timothy to be able to minister among the Jews.

And that was a principle decision of the apostle Paul as much as the decision not to circumcise Titus. Paul was simply following the principle that he would become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

[38 : 53] And so to those Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, the Jew, I became like one under the law so as to win those under the law. To take away any obstacle that would keep me from being able to tell them about salvation is found in none other than Jesus Christ and all he has done.

So there was nothing wrong with Timothy being circumcised as long as he wasn't believing it saved him or made him better with God or was teaching others to do the same.

And verse four makes it clear that this was the case because what did they do as they traveled among these churches? What did Paul and Silas and Timothy announce? Well verse four tells us that as they traveled from town to town they delivered the decision reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey was that Gentiles who believed in Jesus did not have to be circumcised in order to be saved.

That was the big issue that was decided at the Jerusalem council. And so that was being announced that Gentiles as Gentiles could become fellow heirs with the Jews of this great salvation in Jesus Christ just by believing, just by turning to Jesus Christ.

Christ. So Timothy agrees to join the missionary team to go with Paul on this dangerous journey for the gospel even though we find out in other places he was younger and he was of a timid disposition and he was often sick.

[40 : 32] Yet he said here am I send me use me my hands my feet my mouth whatever I am all my reasoning all my powers let it be expended for Christ.

And he also agreed to be circumcised not a painless procedure for an adult again just showing that the kingdom of God was first with this man was above his own personal ease and comfort and whatever whatever I will put up with anything if only Christ might be glorified.

well we come to the last thing the sixth the result we've seen all these things about Timothy he's now going on this this journey is now ministering with Paul and Silas what was the result of his mission along with Paul and Silas verse 5 tells us the result was that the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers now again I want to remind you that this region where they're at and where they're ministering is the region of the Galatians and these churches had been rocked by the Judaizers who came from Jerusalem and who were telling them a false gospel of Christ plus circumcision and that had earlier stirred Paul up such that he took pen and he wrote the letter to the Ephesians and he fired it off to them and he says if anyone preaches to you any other gospel than the one you heard from us let him be accursed remember how strong he is he's writing to these folks because he's he's hearing that they're being tempted by this other gospel that's adding something to

Christ adding something man does and that letter preached the Christ plus nothing gospel to these churches but he's still concerned for them wonder how they've received my letter and now he's saying let's go back and see how the brothers are doing and now he comes on this follow up visit on the second journey and he's preaching again to them but he's also delivering the decision from Jerusalem by the apostles of Jesus and the elders there which was the Gentiles don't have to be circumcised to be saved just trust in what Jesus has done and you're right with God so he's come on this follow up trip and the purity of the true gospel of Christ was maintained it was upheld it was clarified the gospel was established more firmly in their hearts against all the encroachments of man's works meriting salvation and I say when the gospel is made plain when the gospel is proclaimed in truthfulness when it is preserved from all air when all eyes are directed to Christ and him crucified what happens well under the blessing of God two things result two things result we find them both in verse five first the churches were strengthened in the faith they were made firm they were made solid in the faith it's the same word that was used in chapter three when Peter and John went into the temple and they saw that man who was lame on both feet and then when he spoke in the name of Jesus stand up and walk his ankles and his feet were made firm those muscles those ligaments that had been dead for so they were strengthened suddenly and he got up and walked and leaped and praised God that's the word used here what happens when the gospel is maintained and preached and eyes are kept on Jesus and him crucified the strength of the church the faith was strengthened the church was strengthened in their faith and [44:35] I want to say that it is the truth that strengthens churches it is error it is false doctrine that weakens churches it is the truth that strengthens churches all confusion about doctrine all confusion especially about gospel truth leaves the church tossing to and fro by every wind of doctrine by the cunning and craftiness of deceitful men in their scheming no it's the truth that makes the church grow up into Christ strengthened mature unshaken truth matters for the strengthening of the church true doctrine matters for the strength and that's what happened here as truth was preached and the true gospel maintained the church was strengthened in faith there's a lot of winds blowing today blowing false teaching and it's not just out there it's in the churches it's from the pulpits it's over the airwaves it's in the

Christian bookstores it's every wind of doctrine and where the church and its people are not well instructed in the truth they're tossed they go astray they follow after the wrong path are you growing in your knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus do you know the truth well enough to detect errors can you listen to the airwaves and and listen to that preach you know that's just not true and to your mind come the verses what about this what about that what about what Jesus said here what about what Moses said what Paul said there do you know the Bible that well that you can discern error are you pouring over its pages yourself are you coming to the teaching hours of the church to be instructed well clarifying the truth of the gospel not only strengthens the church in their doctrines of the faith but it strengthens their faith in the

Lord himself and is that not the great need to have our faith strengthened because as goes our faith so goes our whole Christian life we walk by faith and not by sight I need my faith strengthened what will strengthen the truth faith comes by hearing the word of Christ well it's in the when the true gospel is set before us we behold Christ and our faith in him grows as we see him as he is well then let's feed our faith on the truth as it is in Jesus let's not add to the gospel let's not subtract from it when a church loses the true gospel Ichabod can be written upon the door the glory has departed whatever the church may claim to be if they've lost the gospel it has become a synagogue of Satan according to Jesus in Revelation 2 and 3 because it's serving Satan's purposes which are what they're always to damn men and to rob glory from Jesus Christ that's why Paul can say I am set both for the defense and the proclamation of the gospel because he knew that it's the true gospel that will build the church up and strengthen her in the faith but secondly the other result of maintaining the true gospel was that more people were saved and were added to the church so that it grew daily in numbers under the blessing of God the true gospel was given fruit now this was revival conditions such as were found among the Jews in those early days in Jerusalem remember they preached and in one day 3,000 accepted the message were baptized and added to their number that day that was in Jerusalem among Jews who heard the gospel from Peter now here we are saying gospel of

Jesus Christ being preached way out in pagan territory and what do we read we read that more and more that they grew daily in numbers that means there were converts every day being baptized and

added to the church now this too was the result of maintaining the purity of the gospel of Christ because you know a false gospel doesn't save anyone if anyone is trusting in a wrong gospel that I can be saved by Christ plus my own works that won't save anybody!

[49:44] Paul says and so by maintaining the truth of the gospel they had the gospel that they could offer any sinner and say if you will receive this message and the Christ who offers himself to you in this gospel you will be saved and that's what they did and God honored it Christ honored it and we find people believing every day being added to the church this is the Lord Jesus honoring his own gospel and so if we would see the word of the gospel brought with more than just word but in power and the Holy Spirit and deep conviction we must preach it as we've received it this is the Lord Jesus what we've read this morning about this church is being strengthened more converts daily added this is Jesus building his church strengthening her expanding her increasing her can I have a word with you that may not know

Christ this morning it's no small thing that Christ has preserved his gospel all these years here we are some 2000 years later and this saving gospel the true gospel has been preserved all those 2000 years preserved where in a world where Satan has been spreading his lies distorting and twisting the truth infiltrating the church yes in this wicked world Jesus Christ has maintained the true gospel and get this that he has brought you here this morning August 21 2016 to hear the true gospel which if you receive and trust in his son you will have everlasting life do you see the privilege of having this gospel preserved and brought to you they were privileged weren't they that that the erroneous doctrine of the Judaizers had not prevailed and stripped them of the gospel and you too are privileged to hear it but what will you do with it oh receive this

Jesus today it's a kindness of God to brought the gospel to you oh trust in this Savior receive him believe on what he has done for sinners and become another worker another worker and the greatest thing happening in the world today Jesus is building his church the kingdom of Christ is advancing it's coming to earth with power and it will one day come in consummation and perfection join the kingdom of Christ come to the Savior today let's pray our reigning and exalted Lord Jesus we thank you for what we've read of church history this morning and seeing how how it is that you recruit workers for the harvest field that you you find us lost and and you save us you find us in wickedness you find us in self absorption you find us in pagan cities you find us in families that are that are split you find us in all sorts of situations and and you save us we lay all the glory for that salvation at your feet this morning and we would like to offer up ourselves afresh to you to be your servants oh servant of the

Lord who served with perfection your father make us more like yourself let this same attitude that was in you be found in us that we would put other interests above our own especially the interest of you our Lord Jesus and your kingdom the interest of other people around us who either are lost and need to be invited into the kingdom and told the gospel or are already found and need to be urged on to not let go of Christ and this gospel so help us and make us more useful we ask and draw people even this day to be saved we ask in your name amen