

AROUND THE BIBLE IN 12 WEEKS

Lesson 9 - Lessons to Leaders

September 1, 2013
Craig Crawshaw

PAUL' S CHURCH EPISTLES AS A WHOLE

The 9 Christian Church Epistles, all from Paul, consist of a QUARTET, TRIO & PAIR

1. **His CROSS** is the emphasis of Romans, ½ Corinthians and Galatians as **FAITH** looks to what Jesus did for us
2. **His CHURCH** is the emphasis of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians as **LOVE** is revealed as to what Jesus is doing in and through us now
3. **His COMING** is the emphasis of ½ Thessalonians as **HOPE** is buoyed by what Jesus will do for us

THE THESSALONIAN LETTERS

The two Thessalonian letters are considered to be Paul' s earliest writings in our Bible, written around 53 AD while Paul was in Corinth. Their combined emphasis is the RETURN OF JESUS.

They are written to the church Paul founded in Thessalonica in only three weeks, before he was run out of town by anti-Christian zealots. (Acts 17:1-12) Thessalonica is on the east coast of what we now know as Greece.

1. 1 Thessalonians concentrates on Jesus' return to meet believers in the sky ("rapture")
2. 2 Thessalonians concentrates on Jesus' return to earth with His angels to judge

Some interpret prophecy as indicating that these two returns will be 7 years apart, with what we call the "tribulation" in-between (this view is called "pre-trib")

Others interpret prophecy as indicating that these two returns will be simultaneous, happening after the 7 year tribulation (this view is called "post-trib")

1 Thessalonians has 5 short chapters, each ending with a reference to Jesus' return.

- 1:10** [you] wait for [God' s] Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.
- 2:19** For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?
- 3:13** May [the Lord] establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
- 4:17** [We will] meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.
- 5:23** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapters 1-3 Paul commends the Thessalonian church for the wonderful report Timothy has brought to him.

1:2-3 We give thank to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ ...

In chapters 4-5 Paul encourages a set-apart lifestyle of holiness while waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus to receive them in the air.

VERSES OF CONSEQUENCE

1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet*

the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 *Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.*

2 Thessalonians has 3 short chapters which teach of the sure return of Jesus to deal out retribution to the ungodly and deal with the "man of lawlessness" who will arise during the 7 years of tribulation who we know as the "AntiChrist." Believers are to work, watch and wait.

VERSES OF CONSEQUENCE

2 Thessalonians 1:7a-9 *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.*

2 Thessalonians 2:1,3,6-7 *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him ... let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

2 Thessalonians 3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.*

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

After the 9 letters of Paul to churches, comes the 4 letters of Paul to pastors. Thus, these are called the "Pastoral Epistles." That is why we have called this lesson "Letters to Leaders." Surely these principles have first application for church leaders in a church setting, yet the principles transfer to all believers as well, and help us all to realize what an importance the local church body has in the plan of God.

Timothy was pastor of perhaps the largest church in Macedonia - the Ephesian church.

Titus was pastor of a medium sized congregation on the island of Crete.

Philemon was a pastor of a small home church, probably meeting in his own home.

From these 4 books we get clear instruction on

- (1) the importance of the church, (2) guarding the doctrine of the church,
- (3) qualifications for leaders of the church and (4) how to conduct oneself in the church

1 Timothy was written while Paul was still a free man, but 2 Timothy was written during Paul's second Roman imprisonment, which would bring the end of his life. Thus 2 Timothy is the last letter to be written by Paul, giving us a glimpse into "how to finish strong." (2 Tim. 4)

1 & 2 Timothy is, simply put, a CHARGE for Timothy (and all church leaders who follow him) to GUARD THE GOSPEL which has been entrusted by God. The key verse for this overarching theme is:

2 Timothy 2:14 *Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.*

VERSES OF CONSEQUENCE

1 Timothy 1:5 *For the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

1 Timothy 1:15 *It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.*

1 Timothy 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

1 Timothy 4:7b-8 *Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; but bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

1 Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.*

2 Timothy 1:12 *For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.*

2 Timothy 4:2-3 *Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.*

2 Timothy 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Titus is a brief 3 chapter letter that is again a charge to church leadership. This time, the emphasis is “good works” - not as a means of salvation, but as a means to showing our faith in action.

VERSES OF CONSEQUENCE

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

Titus 3:8 *This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.*

Philemon is a brief one chapter, 25 short verse book. Paul makes an appeal to Philemon (though as an apostle he could order him). Philemon's slave, Onesimus,

had run away to Paul. This action was worthy of death. While Onesimus was with Paul he was saved. And now Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon, appealing to him to receive the runaway slave as a brother, displaying mercy.

The book gives us the overarching principle that we need to extend mercy to the repentant sinner, receiving the new believer or repentant believer into fellowship.

Philemon 15-16 *For perhaps he was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.*