

# GOSPELTHOUGHTS

January 14, 2009

so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity of faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

*Ephesians 4:12-13*

**For a Stronger  
Healthier Church**



## A Biblical Theology of the Gospel Pastoral Epistles

The gospel is the core, the foundation for Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus. In these three epistles Paul develops the gospel theme in connection with the personal life of God's servants and the corporate life of the church. A biblical theology of the Gospel in the Pastoral Epistles will demonstrate that the gospel is not only foundational for life and ministry but that it is an intimate part of the fabric of life and ministry.

### 1 Timothy

The epistle opens in 1:15 with a focus on the transforming power of the Gospel in the call of God's servant Paul. This is then followed in 1:18ff by a reference to Hymenaeus and Alexander who are examples of those departing from the gospel.

As Paul unfolds the epistle he refers to God in Gospel terms, *God our Savior*. 2:3; 4:9-10. This is evident also in Titus 2:13.

According to 2:2ff, the gospel influences our prayer life. The type of prayer exhorted in this section pleases God our Savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

The well-known biblical qualifications for leadership in 1 Timothy 3 are gospel related. The leadership must be blameless to care for the fruit of the gospel – the church.

The mystery of godliness is gospel related in that it recounts the core elements of the gospel in a Corinthians-like style (1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5).

Paul concludes the first epistle with exhortations to Timothy that are gospel centered (6:11-16; 17-21).

## 2 Timothy

Note how the first chapters of 1 and 2 Timothy present Paul and Timothy's experience of the Gospel. These chapters detail how the grace of the gospel came to them. In both books, the grace of the gospel is the foundation for a holy life and a call to ministry faithfulness.

In a manner similar to 1 Timothy 1:18ff, 2 Timothy 1:15ff highlights departures from the gospel. In this context attention is placed on everyone in the province of Asia and specifically Phygelus and Hermongenes.

In 2 Timothy 2:8-13 Paul demonstrates the centrality of the gospel in suffering. The apostle's resolve is confessed in his affirmation, *I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory (2:10).*

The experience of grace and the call of the gospel significantly affects the character of the man of God and his ministry. Paul contrasts approved workmen with unapproved workmen in 2:14ff. In this context another reference is made to Hymenaeus. Together with Philetus, they have wandered from the truth (2:18).

The inspired Scripture that is able to make one wise unto salvation is gospel related (3:15-16).

The final exhortations in chapter 4 to preach the Word are intrinsically Gospel related.

**In the presence of God and of 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; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.**

## Titus

In keeping with the salutations of I and II Timothy Paul begins his address to Titus with a focus on the gospel (1:1-3). These opening words highlight the certainty of eternal life in connection with the righteous character of God. This truth is made known by means of gospel related preaching.

Godly living is gospel saturated. The gospel grace that brings salvation is the gospel grace that teaches us to live godly lives (Titus 2:11-12).

In this same context (2:11-14) Paul connects the gospel with the coming of Christ for a gospel related eschatology (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Paul concludes his letter to Titus with a focus on the transforming power of the Gospel (3:3-7).

**At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, who he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.**