

Title: Joint operating agreement  
Text: 1 Timothy 1.1-2  
Theme: The relationship of the Father and the Son  
Series: 1 Timothy #2  
Prop Stmt: The relationship of the Father and the Son drives all other relationships

Read Text:

Have you ever met someone who was so full of Jesus, that even when they just said “hi” you wanted to love Jesus more? I think Paul must have been like that. Here at the beginning of this letter, he writes a greeting that is wonderful. It is deep, rich, beautiful, encouraging, thoughtful, doctrinal and personal. It is quite a bit different from how we tend to greet one another, isn’t it?

I tend to be more of a literalist. When someone comes up to me and says, “Guess what?” I try to guess. And after 3 or 4 guesses, I start to realize that they really don’t want me to guess. In fact, the more I try to guess, the more frustrated they are becoming. It was just a way for them to start a conversation. Well, when Paul writes a letter, he does not use filler words. Every word matters. In fact, even his greeting makes us want to love Jesus and the church even more. Let me explain and we will start with the obvious.

## **I. The Relationship (1.1-2)**

V.1 begins with “Paul” and v.2 begins with “To Timothy.” It is obvious that this is a personal letter from Paul to Timothy. And true to form of proper letters in that day, this letter has a greeting that identifies the author, the recipient and the status of each.

### **A. Paul**

Paul identifies himself as an apostle. There are two ways in which this title is used. 1) It means someone who is sent on a mission in order to deliver a message. That certainly applies to Paul and it applies to every person who is a follower of Christ. But when the word apostle is used in the NT, it is used for the most part to refer to a specific group of men who actually saw Christ after he was resurrected and who were commissioned directly by him. This commissioning happened for most of them in Matthew 28. This small group of men was instrumental in the establishing of the church, but, when they died, the office of an apostle died with them. These apostles are identified as being part of the foundation of the church, upon which everyone else is built.

Although Paul identifies himself as an apostle, he wasn’t always like this. In fact, later in this chapter he said that he was formerly a blasphemer, persecutor and an insolent opponent. He does not mince the truth. He hated Christ and he hated those who identified themselves as followers of Christ and he hunted them down in order to persecute them, imprison them and even kill them. But, God had other plans. Acts 9 tells us the story. Paul, whose name was Saul at the time, was on his way to Damascus in order to hunt down the Christians there. Saul was on a mission from the High Priest in Jerusalem. In

fact, he was carrying a letter with him that authorized him to go into the synagogues in Damascus and arrest any professing Christians there. On his way, the Lord hijacked his life. In fact, God blinded him and Christ spoke to him and asked him why he (Saul) was persecuting me (Christ). Jesus told him, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Saul was then told to go into the city and wait for further instructions, which he did. A few days later, Saul made his profession of faith in Christ public, and this man who was exceedingly knowledgeable in the Old Testament scriptures, now, finally understood them. Saul realized that the entire Old Testament was all about Jesus and this man who had planned to go into the synagogues and arrest Christians, started to go into the synagogues and was preaching Jesus. Of course, now people wanted to arrest him!

So, when Paul says that he is an apostle by command of God, he is not kidding. God gloriously and rudely interrupted his life and changed him from the inside out. In fact, God gave him a new name. Instead of being called Saul, he was now known as Paul. But, as you study the life of Paul, it is very clear that he does not resent the interruption. He does not serve Christ because he is terrified, if he doesn't. He preaches Christ, because he is profoundly grateful for what God did. Paul had no intention on following Christ, and he now knows that left to himself, he would have persecuted hundreds of Christians, and would spend eternity in hell. Paul's life is a response of profound gratitude and praise to God for overruling his plan. From that point on, Paul was on a mission from God to make Christ known. In fact, he was appointed by God as an apostle. As one of the apostles who were helping to establish the church, he, and the other apostles had an authority over the churches that they used in order to get churches established and headed in the right direction. Timothy is not an apostle. Timothy did not see Jesus. But, Timothy is called to represent Paul in Ephesus and do what Paul would have done in order to help set things in order. But how did Paul and Timothy become so close?

## **B. Timothy**

Paul escaped Damascus and ended up in Antioch.) A few years later the church in Antioch sent him and Barnabas on a trip to establish churches. During that first trip, they went to Lystra where God used Paul's ministry to bring Timothy to faith in Christ. Paul and Barnabas stayed long enough to establish a church. Then Paul left. Timothy was a younger man than Paul, who showed great promise for ministry in his home church in Lystra. When Paul came back to Lystra, during his second trip, he saw the character and skill of this young man. But there was something else that was providential. Timothy's mother was a Jew, but his father was a Greek. Being from a mixed family ethnically, culturally and religiously was extremely helpful because Timothy was like a walking illustration of what the church was called to do in bringing people together who were naturally born enemies and make them family. He was of mixed race. He was part Jew and part Gentile who was a follower of Christ. Isn't that it? Isn't the church called to be one people from every tribe, language and nation who follow Christ? Timothy's zeal, reputation, commitment, humility, and tenderness were very attractive and needful to Paul. So when Paul came back to Lystra, Timothy was reconnected with Paul. They had a deep friendship and love for one another. Paul needed and loved Timothy. Timothy was an enormous encouragement to Paul. Timothy travelled with Paul. They went to Athens,

where Timothy was sent to Thessalonica. Timothy rejoined Paul in Corinth. Timothy learned a lot from Paul and was so close to him and so much like him that Paul told the believers at Philippi that “*I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.*” (Phil. 2.20) Paul is saying that this guy loves you like I love you! So, when it became obvious that the church in Ephesus needed additional help, Paul left Timothy there to give direction to the church because of the problems that remained unresolved. After Paul left Timothy there, he wrote this letter back to him in order to help him know how to address the problems as well as put other things in place. That is why this letter is not merely an instruction manual; it is a father training his son. It is an elder statesman mentoring his protégé. It is a seasoned saint training the next generation. This letter is practical and it is personal. It is doctrinal, it is organizational and it is heart-felt because that is what the church is supposed to be like.

The church is given structure and organization in order to protect and promote the gospel. Think of it like this. The structure and organization of the church is like the fence around the playground. The fence keeps predators out so that, inside the kids can have fun! God has given the church instructions so that the structure of the church will free us to enjoy God and one another. Now, you may not see all of that in this greeting, but I would argue that we have a very strong hint of it. Let me explain.

I mentioned that there are no filler or throw-away words in this greeting. Since other letters in the NT were written by Paul, we can compare the greetings and discover that Paul’s greetings set the tone for the rest of the letter. For example look at the greeting in the book of Galatians. What is emphasized? His apostleship and authority!

Now look at the greeting in the book of Philippians. What is emphasized? Paul and Timothy are servants. If you know anything about those two letters you know that Paul has already introduced a very important issue right in the greeting. To the Galatians he has to exercise his role as an apostle and address some theological issues that were threatening to destroy the gospel and the churches. But, to the believers at Philippi, he is writing to encourage them, an in particular he is calling upon two women to humble themselves and resolve the issue that separated them. These women needed to see themselves as servants to the other. You can see that even in his greeting he establishes these themes and he does the same thing here, but in a fascinating way.

## **II. THE Relationship (1.1-2)**

Look at v.1. Paul is commanded to be an apostle by a joint operating agreement between God, the Father and Christ Jesus, the son. Paul draws attention again to the Father and the Son in v.2 when he greets Timothy with grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, when we think of Savior, we generally think of Christ, the Son of God, who died on the cross in order to save us from our sin. But, here, Paul calls the Father, our Savior. In fact, Paul refers to God as Savior six times in the Pastoral Epistles, and he refers to Christ as Savior four times. In Titus, Paul alternates back and forth between calling God

our Savior and Christ our Savior. Our salvation is the result of a joint task force in the Trinity. Here Paul focuses on the fact that God is our Savior and Christ is our hope. He is emphasizing the fact that the Father is the architect who planned our salvation and the Son is means by which our salvation was secured. Together, the Father and the Son carried out our rescue.

The Father and the Son love each other infinitely. Our salvation is rooted in and sourced in this infinite love. The Father and the Son love one another and us. God loves us. The Father did the most difficult thing possible. He allowed his Son to be crushed for you. His love for you drove him to devise a plan for your salvation that cost him the life of his Son. The Son loves the Father and loves you so much that he was willing to be crushed so that His Father's glorious mercy would be set on display and so that you would be rescued. That is why Christ is our hope and why grace, mercy and peace come from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. But, I am convinced that Paul draws our attention to THE relationship of the Father and Son because...

### III. **THE Relationship informs their relationship.** (1.2)

Here is what I want you to see. The relationship of God the Father and his Son, Jesus sets the pattern for the relationship of Paul and Timothy. Paul is the spiritual father, and Timothy is "*my true child in the faith.*" THE Father/Son relationship is characterized by love. If you could get in between the Father and the Son, you would experience a love and a contentment that is unparalleled. It is beyond beautiful. But that Father/Son love informs this Father/Son love. Paul loves Timothy and Timothy loves Paul. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy Paul tells him, "I remember your tears. I long to see you that I may be filled with joy." 2 Timothy is Paul's final letter before he is executed. He does not ask to be released, he asks for Timothy to come. "Do your best to come to me soon."

Now, just as the love of THE Father and Son is the infinite and beautiful source of their love for the church, so, Paul's love for Timothy and Timothy's love for Paul flows out in their love for the church as well. Notice how this plays out. In v.3 Paul reiterates the fact that he left Timothy in Ephesus in order to charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine. So, Timothy is given a charge from Paul and Timothy has to deliver this charge. This charge is a joint-charge. This charge is a joint operating agreement. Then in v.5 Paul writes that the "aim of our (joint-operating agreement) charge is LOVE! Paul is not delivering this charge to Timothy and through Timothy because he is demanding respect, although Paul is an apostle. He is not delivering this charge because he is an incredible Bible scholar, although he is that too. He is delivering this charge because he and Timothy love the believers at Ephesus and everything that Paul writes and that Timothy is called to correct and set in place is the fruit of a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

The greeting concludes with a blessing from Paul to Timothy. This blessing is a prayer and wish that Timothy enjoys grace, mercy and peace. This grace, mercy and peace, as we have already noted is able to be poured out upon Timothy, at the request of Paul because the Father and the Son enjoy the relationship they do.

It is common for Paul to write, *grace and peace* in his greetings. If you know anything about Paul, you know that he loves to focus upon God's grace. Paul understands God's grace to be the means by which we are justified and the means by which we grow in Christ. Elsewhere he wrote, that is by grace you have been saved. Saving or justifying grace refers to the truth that God has given us something we do not deserve. Because Christ died in our place and took our wrath, God is able to give us forgiveness and credit us with the righteousness of Christ. In fact, that is the only means by which we can be restored to God. Grace wipes out human achievement. Grace wipes out our efforts in order to prove our own righteousness or being deserving of being forgiven. Grace is God's incredible and happy generosity that provides us with a redemption that is free and full. Saving grace, places us into a relationship with God that is continually sustained by and surrounded by grace. God's grace enables us to grow as believers. God's grace enables us to think of others instead of ourselves. God's grace enables us to love, forgive, hope, endure, have joy, and overcome sin and temptation. If Timothy is going to be successful in putting things in order in this church, it is only going to be by God's grace.

Peace refers, primarily to the kind of standing that we have with God through Christ. We are at peace. We, who used to be rebels are now family. We, who used to be enemies, are now friends. We, who used to be under his wrath, are now under his grace. We, who used to be damned, now await an inheritance that is incorruptible. No longer do we live in terror of God because we are at peace with him through Christ.

But, here Paul also desires Timothy to be reminded of and to be the recipient of God's mercy. When *mercy* is used in reference to our salvation, it has the idea of God withholding punishment from us. In other words, God did not give us what we deserved. But, why? Because God is compassionate and tender and longsuffering. So, when Paul is praying and wishing for Timothy to be blessed with the mercy of God, he is desiring that Timothy be given a fresh measure of mercy so that Timothy has the compassion and patience in order to serve the church well.

Now, I want to talk to the kids for a minute. Earlier this morning, you learned about the prophet Elijah. Elijah had to confront the false prophets in Israel because those false prophets were saying false things about God. Elijah felt all alone when he did that, and even though he did it, he became discouraged and eventually tried to quit because he was feeling so sorry for himself. Confronting false teachers is exhausting. People resent you and they will scorn you. Well, there were some false teachers in the church at Ephesus and Timothy had to deal with them. Paul knew that he would be tempted to be discouraged and want to quit. That is why Paul is praying for Timothy to have sustaining grace, compassion and confidence in God, so that he is faithful and loving. (example)

#### IV. **THE Relationship informs our relationships.**

So, let's put this together. The Father and the Son have a relationship of incredible love that is not only an example for Paul and Timothy, but God's infinite love supplies them with an inexhaustible love. Now, because they are both so loved by God, and because

God's love is expressed to both Paul and Timothy by the other, they are in an even better position to be able to love the people in the church.

So, to all of the leaders in the church know this. Your ministry to others will be most effective to the degree that you love them. And your love for those you serve, needs to be stirred up and encouraged by the love you experience from a close relationship with other believers. Your close relationship to other believers is a primary means that God uses to remind you and pour fresh grace, mercy and peace into your life so that you can pour that into the lives of others.

To the congregation as a whole: Do you long for a healthy and happy church? Do you realize how important it is, that you are in a family of believers who are growing in actual love for God and one another? If you realize that a family of believers who are bound together by God's love is high-octane fuel for your life, then you will long for your leaders to love God and love one another. In other words, when you pray for your leaders, pray that they will grow in deep affection for God and one another. That way they will grow in deeper affection for you. If the leaders do not love one another, they will most likely not love you very well and if you are not loved very well, then you won't love others very well. A group of people who do not love one another very well, may be many things, but it is not a beautiful bride for Jesus and Jesus is worth a beautiful bride.

I am about done. I am going to conclude with a story, a goal to pursue and a challenge. Story, goal and challenge. Here's the story. My daughter Rebecca had a roommate in college who, like her was going to college away from home. This girl attended a church that was almost exclusively made up of people in their 70's and up. They did not dress like her, listen to the same kind of music, or have the same kind of interests or challenges. But, in spite of all the sociological data that would say that she would never fit in, she would not attend anywhere else because, they loved her.

Here's the goal to pursue. We are blessed with a beautiful facility, beautiful grounds, all in an accessible location. There are people who stop in for a service because the appearance is inviting. That makes sense. We understand that. But, no one is going to have their life changed by a building. We long for people, who spend anytime with us at all, to see how much we love one another, and to realize, we would love them too. The attractiveness of a building does not make a church, but the stickiness of the gospel does. The love of God poured into our lives and through our lives is not only sticky, it is supernatural. Here's the challenge:

Ok, I am giving you some homework, ok? When the teacher says that you are getting homework, that is usually not welcome news, is it? However, when the teacher says that you are getting homework and that you are going to have some time to work on it, in class, well, that's a little better right? Well, here is a double blessing. I am giving you some homework that you will love AND I am giving you some time to work on it this morning. Here it is: Think about these questions. 1) How can I encourage the leadership of the church to love one another? 2) What are 2 things I could do this morning (and every Sunday) to express love for others who are here?