



Refreshing the Gifts of the Spirit for the Pastoral Ministry

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False Teachers, Contentment & Fighting the Good Fight

1 Tim. 6:3–21

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“You have gifts that could be used as a pastor!” Perhaps someone told you something like this to encourage you to prepare for a call into the pastoral ministry. “You speak well,” “You have a heart for people,” “You are a serious young man” and so forth. Good first article gifts, yes! So, you went off to college and seminary to prepare.

These gifts were honed by the Spirit in the Word of God. Languages were learned, Scripture studied, faith tested, confessions digested, life examined, readiness confirmed by the church, until you were placed in a call, ordained and installed. The Spirit of God works through means to do His work.

So, you devoted yourself in the mornings to the lifelong study of the Word of God, and in the afternoons and evenings to both the care of your family and the study of your people. You grew to know and to love the lambs of the Good Shepherd given into your care. You led your people into your community and into the world to seek and to save the lost. You sought to shepherd them all through this life to the next, all through the means ordained by Christ for this purpose — His sure Word and precious Sacraments.

You endured the devil’s temptations, conquering by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. You were driven time and again back to Christ, back to His Word. You found yourself desperate to hear again for yourself His Word of forgiveness, longing to be fed by His body and blood. You revel in these gifts of the Spirit.

Yet, there still is the sinful flesh clinging not only to your people, but even more so to you. The world not only entices the mind and heart of the members of your parish, but — as embarrassed as you may be to admit it — the voices of this present age threaten to drown out for you the voice of Jesus Himself. You have felt more and more alone. You know the pain of the devil’s “flaming darts” and experience in your own ministry the truth that Satan has a target on the backs of faithful pastors.

(Continued on next page.)



Where are the resources? What are the gifts the Spirit has for pastors? The Lord's inspired apostle wrote three letters specifically for pastors, one for Titus and two for Timothy, and we get to look over their shoulders to read them as well. So, we read:

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task" (1 Tim. 3:1).

This saying is also *"trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost" (1 Tim. 1:15).*

Therefore, *"he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).*

"For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

"Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:13-16).

O man of God, *"share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:8-10).*

"But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:11-12).

"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and sound teaching" (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

You see, without a doubt we live in times *"when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions" (2 Tim. 4:3).* So, how will we help one another *"always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5)?* Actually, our circuit pastoral conferences (circuit "winkels") were originally designed to do just that.

The purpose of these circuit winkel Bible studies, published by the Synod Praesidium, is to provide you with some tools for this task. This year (2018-19), our studies will lead us into the pastoral epistles of St. Paul. This study will be supplemented by excerpts from a commentary on the pastorals prepared by Pastor Mark W. Love of Trinity Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio, and citations from the 2017 edition of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. We offer this guide with the prayer that you may thereby be renewed in the gifts of the Spirit for the pastoral ministry.

For more in-depth discussion, you may wish to obtain the commentary *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy/Titus/Philemon* or the 2017 edition of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* from Concordia Publishing House.

Peace be with you!

+ Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller

First Vice-President

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod





September 2018

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:
**“Guard the Deposit
Entrusted to You”** (2 Timothy 1)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ...”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, Vol. 43 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:200.

INTRODUCTION: 2 Timothy from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

Second Timothy Introduction

Paul writes from prison in Rome. He has been a prisoner for some time: Onesiphorus, a Christian of Ephesus, had already sought him out and visited him in Rome (2 Ti 1:16–17). There has already been one hearing, at which Paul was deserted by all men and yet, with the Lord's help, so successfully defended himself that he "was rescued from the lion's mouth" (2 Tim 4:16–17). But Paul has no hope of ultimate acquittal; he is at the end of his course. And he is virtually alone; only Luke is with him. He longs to see "his beloved child" Timothy once more and bids him come to Rome before the winter makes travel by sea impossible (2 Ti 1:4; 4:9, 21). But he must reckon with the possibility that Timothy may not reach Rome in time; and so he must put in writing all that he hopes to tell Timothy in person if and when he arrives. The letter is thus, as Bengel has put it, Paul's "last will and testament" in which he bids Timothy preserve the apostolic Gospel pure and unchanged, guard it against the increasingly vicious attacks of false teachers, train men to transmit it faithfully, and be ready to take his own share of suffering in the propagation and defense of it. The most personal of the Pastoral Letters is therefore in a sense "official" too; for Paul cannot separate his person from his office. The man who has been "set apart for the gospel of God" (Ro 1:1) remains one with that Gospel in life and in death. Date of writing: A. D. 65–67.³

God's Grace in 2 Timothy

God's grace is the central message in all of Paul's letters — down to his last letter, 2 Timothy, composed while he

was chained in prison at Rome, knowing that the end was near. As his last will and testament, Paul again encourages Timothy to proclaim the message of God's grace, emphasizing its basic truths. This grace was given us "in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (1:9–10). "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel" (2:8), that "the elect ... may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (2:10), and so "we will also live with him ... we will also reign with him" (2:11–12) and will receive "the crown of righteousness" (4:8).

What an inheritance for Paul to leave to his spiritual son Timothy — the Gospel of God's grace — and for us to leave to our children!

Luther on 2 Timothy

This epistle is a farewell letter, in which St. Paul exhorts Timothy to go on propagating the gospel, even as he has begun. This is quite necessary, since there are many who fall away; and false spirits and teachers keep springing up all around. Therefore, it is incumbent upon a bishop always to be alert and to work at the gospel.

But he prophesies especially ... concerning the perilous time at the end of the world. It is then that a false spiritual life will lead all the world astray, with an outward show, under which every sort of wickedness and wrong will have its fling. Sad to say! we now see this prophecy of St. Paul all too amply fulfilled in our clergy.⁴

READ: 2 Timothy 1:1–18

Commentary Excerpts: 2 Timothy 1 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁵

1:3 clear conscience ... prayers night and day. This may seem like a rather arrogant thing for Paul to say. A "clear conscience"? Isn't this the guy who persecuted the Church (Ac 9:1–2), even watched approvingly as others stoned Stephen (Ac 7:54–60)? Yes, it is Paul who used to be called Saul, but he is not the same man. Having been

forgiven in Christ, the blood of Christ cleansed him and his conscience of all sin (1 Jn 1:7). A clear conscience for Paul, as for any believer, is cleared by God through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ alone. As such, Paul served the Lord and His Church according to Christ's work for him, in him, and through him. While his past might have given him no cause to pray, the mercy and grace of Christ had set him free to pray constantly to the

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:224.

⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 35, *Word and Sacrament I*, eds. E. Theodore Bachmann and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 389.

⁵ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 99–112.

Lord for Timothy and all people. Paul knew that God's reason to listen and to answer his prayers was in Christ alone, and this made him all the more bold to pray.

1:7 a spirit. The fact that Paul refers to “a” spirit excludes this from referring to the Holy Spirit. This refers to that gift of God that orients and animates a person's life and living. In creating mankind, God oriented and animated their lives with the power of love and self-control. When sin entered the picture, all our lives were reoriented by fear: a fear that weakened love so greatly that it limited love to self and the saving of self above all else. Having been born again in Christ, Timothy, like all the baptized, is reoriented and animated to God's original created order of life with God and our neighbor. Bengel wrote, and Wesley nearly repeated these words in his own commentary: “[Power, love, and self-control] operate in us, and animate us to the discharge of our duties towards God, the saints and ourselves. Power [strength] and sober-mindedness are the two extremes, but these in a good sense; love is in the middle, and is the bond, and as it were the check upon both, taking away ... the two bad extremes, timidity and rashness.” (Bengel 4:292)

1:8 the testimony. Here, Paul uses a form of shorthand to refer to the full witness to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Scriptures testify of Him, and as Paul and other faithful preachers bear witness to Him from those Scriptures. This word “testimony” is well chosen, for it identifies exactly what a witness gives to a jury. A true witness offers testimony only to what they actually witnessed. A preacher, teacher, or evangelist in service to Christ is to testify to Him, but only according to what they witnessed of Him in His Word. Any testimony offered only from personal experience would be a witness of self and not of Christ. If it is not rooted in the Word of God, it does not bear the Gospel, and it does not bear God's promise that it will work, feed, or build another person's faith.

1:8 share in suffering for the gospel. The term “suffering” has a broad usage and meaning. Paul is more pointed, calling Timothy to be willing to share in, or accept, the same disgrace that Paul was dealing with for being faithful to the Gospel testimony. Paul was not ashamed of this testimony (the Gospel) because “it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rm 1:16), and it is at work in the hearts and lives of all believers (1 Th 2:13). Any disgrace the believer faces comes from those who have no grace: from sinful mankind. Our faith is in the God of all grace, who is not ashamed to be called our God (Heb 11:16), and it is He who enabled

Paul and us today to suffer whatever may come, and to live by the uninterrupted favor and victory of Christ.

1:9 who ... called us to a holy calling. This refers to the Holy God who saved every person of every time through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (objective justification), using His Holy Word spoken to us to give us the holiness of Christ through His gift of faith. This speaking of His Holy Word is not an exercise of omnipotence, but a free giving of divine love, mercy, and grace to all who receive it. It is referred to as a “calling” because prior to hearing these words, we are spiritually dead, and it is through these words that we are made alive in Christ (Eph 2:5). When Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead, He called him from death to life (Jn 11:43). So in speaking the Holy Gospel to us, the Holy Spirit calls us and sanctifies us through faith (subjective justification). This calling is not irresistible; sadly many do reject it — to their own destruction. This holy calling is lived out in the life of each believer in the various vocational callings the Lord has brought to us.

1:11 preacher ... apostle ... teacher. Paul identifies not so much his titles as his responsibilities according to God's appointment. Each title, though it is a noun, arises from a verb; these were the divine appointed activities that God had given Paul. It is important to note the sequencing of these titles. Notice that “apostle,” though it would seem to be the highest office, isn't set first. Paul places it between the two primary tasks of Timothy, and of every pastor: preaching and teaching. This was Paul's way of affirming that in their appointed service to the Lord, and the suffering that may come because of it, he and Timothy were on the same level. Paul doesn't do this as a gesture of self-abasement, but as a confession that, according to the appointment of God, they together were arm in arm in service of the Gospel.

1:13 able to guard ... entrusted to me. Paul is referring to the Gospel ministry that had been entrusted to his service by God's calling of him to serve as a preacher, apostle, and teacher (v. 11). Because the Gospel ministry is God's work, Paul knew that it was not his, nor was it dependent upon him. It is God's to guard and perpetuate. Paul knew himself to be a sinner who needed constant rescue (Rm 7:15–25), yet God chose to call such a sinner into His service and entrusted him with the Gospel. As such, God “guarded” the Gospel and this ministry in such a way that He worked through this forgiven sinner to further His desire that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1Tm 2:4). Paul knows that he is about to die and knows that God guarded the

Gospel while entrusted to him, and He will continue to guard it in the hands of those who will follow after him in the pastoral office. Timothy is one of those in whom and through whom God was guarding the Gospel ministry. To this day, God is still guarding the Gospel ministry that He has given to the Church and entrusted into the hands of those He still continues to call into the pastoral ministry.

1:14 guard the good deposit. Paul here reminds Timothy that as the Gospel ministry was still entrusted to Paul, it is also entrusted to Timothy as God's called pastor.

The only means by which Timothy or any pastor can rightly "guard" the Gospel, or the Gospel ministry, is by proclaiming the Gospel in all its fullness and following the pattern of practice that it lays out for the salvation of all. Like the Word of God, because it is living and active, the Gospel fully taught, believed, and trusted is its best defense. The ministry of the Gospel is the proclamation of all God's Word, which has two words: the Law (what I must do or be condemned) and Gospel (all Christ has done according to the Law because I could not, to save me). See exposition of 1 Tm 6:20.

CITATIONS: 2 Timothy 1 in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation⁶

2 Timothy 1:8:

213. What are some other outward indications that the Church is present?

Such things as gatherings for prayer and worship, the fruits of faith, and suffering for Christ also serve as good outward indications that the Church is present without guaranteeing it. The Church also uses the Office of the Keys to rebuke and to forgive sins, as well as to consecrate ministers to preach and teach on behalf of all.

713 **John 13:35** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

714 **1 Peter 2:21** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps.

715 **2 Timothy 1:8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

716 **Acts 2:42–43** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

717 **Hebrews 10:24–25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

718 **Romans 12:14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.⁷

2 Timothy 1:10:

159. Why is it so important for us as sinners that the Son of God has become our Brother?

As our Brother, ...

C. Jesus overcame death so that we, too, can be raised from death.

500 **1 Corinthians 15:57** But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

501 **2 Timothy 1:10** Christ Jesus ... abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

502 **1 Corinthians 15:20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.⁸

168. How did Jesus rescue me from death?

He put death to death by His own death and resurrection.

550 **Hebrews 2:14–15** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

⁷ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 215.

⁸ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 171–72.

551 **1 Corinthians 15:54–57** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

552 **2 Timothy 1:10** Our Savior Christ Jesus ... abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.⁹

2 Timothy 1:12:

149. Why do I confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord?

Jesus has given me eternal life and taken me under His eternal care and protection (see LC II 30).

465 **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

466 **John 17:3–5** And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.

467 **2 Timothy 1:12** I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.¹⁰

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office, and about me as one called to this office?

a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?

- › About His work?
- › About His promises/gifts?

b. About me/others?

- › What have I been given?
- › What I am suppose to do/not do?
- › How am I to do what is given me to do?

c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?

- › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
- › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?

d. About the Pastoral Office?

e. About the congregation I serve?

f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

⁹ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 181.

¹⁰ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 165–66.

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What and/or How ...
 - › I have been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - › I have been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in doing well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

"This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns."¹¹ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

¹¹ LW 43:209.

October 2018

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**“A Good Soldier ...
A Worker Approved”** (2 Timothy 2)

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was chained in prison at Rome, knowing that the end was near. As his last will and testament, Paul again encourages Timothy to proclaim the message of God's grace, emphasizing its basic truths. This grace was given us "in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (1:9–10). "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel" (2:8), that "the elect ... may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (2:10), and so "we will also live with him ... we will also reign with him" (2:11–12) and will receive "the crown of righteousness" (4:8).

What an inheritance for Paul to leave to his spiritual son Timothy — the Gospel of God's grace — and for us to leave to our children!

Luther on 2 Timothy

This epistle is a farewell letter, in which St. Paul exhorts Timothy to go on propagating the gospel, even as he has begun. This is quite necessary, since there are many who fall away; and false spirits and teachers keep springing up all around. Therefore, it is incumbent upon a bishop always to be alert and to work at the gospel.

But he prophesies especially ... concerning the perilous time at the end of the world. It is then that a false spiritual life will lead all the world astray, with an outward show, under which every sort of wickedness and wrong will have its fling. Sad to say! we now see this prophecy of St. Paul all too amply fulfilled in our clergy.⁴

READ: 2 Timothy 2:1–26 (ESV)

Commentary Excerpts: 2 Timothy 2 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁵

2:2 faithful men: These refer to those men who meet the qualifications for the pastoral office that Paul set down in his first letter (3:1–7). In light of Paul's experience with the unfaithfulness of many in the face of persecution, he stresses the quality of faithfulness in those Timothy will prepare and likely appoint to be pastors.

2:3 suffering as a good soldier: Paul introduced the imagery of waging spiritual warfare in his first letter (1 Tm 1:18). Here, he uses the analogy of an obedient soldier to further enlighten Timothy, and every pastor, to the potential consequences to one enlisted by God to fight the good fight of faith (4:7). The quality of "good" is determined by the pastor's willingness to share in the suffering that may come from faithfully fulfilling the charge and responsibilities of the pastoral office.

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:224.

⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 35, *Word and Sacrament I*, eds. E. Theodore Bachmann and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 389.

⁵ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 99–112.

The “good” pastor is the one who seeks no conflict in speaking and administering the Word of God for the sake of his hearers. At the same time, he does not shrink away from speaking and administering that Word, even if it may cause conflict or offense. It is spoken only and always for the sake of the hearers, whether they like that Word or not.

2:4 civilian pursuits: While Paul may have 1Co 7:26–34 in mind, he stresses the necessity of freedom from earthly agendas and occupations by which Timothy may have had to support himself prior to his enlistment in the Office of the Public Ministry. Paul seeks to have Timothy, and every other pastor, understand that he is to give himself wholly over to the work and will of God for him according to this office. This is a warning against any potential distractions of focus and conflicts between fulfilling their pastoral charge and earthly agendas. If pastors are drawn away from what they have been enlisted to do, they are less useful to those they serve and to the One who enlisted them. In emphasizing this, let it be understood that by these words Paul is not sanctioning the neglect of wife and family for the sake of the ministry. God created the office of husband and father before Christ instituted the Office of the Public Ministry. Paul’s emphasis upon the importance of marital state on the part of any pastor or deacon makes this point most clear (1Tm 3:2, 12; Ti 1:6).

2:4 One who enlisted him: When Christ enlisted the apostles, He did this immediately by personally calling each of them. When it comes to the Office of the Public Ministry, Christ enlists men by calling them through His Church. Whether a man was enlisted by the appointment of an apostle or his representatives (Ti 1:5) or by the local congregations, each man serves at the pleasure of Christ for the sake of His Body — the Church (cf. 1:1).

2:6 first share: While this verse sounds rather proverbial with regard to hard work, it is a statement of fact in the matter of farming. By way of this third analogy, Paul uses the farmer and the harvest to illustrate not what ought to be, but what has to be in regard to the spiritual welfare of Timothy and every pastor. The farmer, no matter how hard he works, has to take the first share of the crop that’s harvested if he is to survive. Notice it is the “first” share, not the largest. If he had said the “largest share,” then the issue would be about how hard the pastor had worked. What Paul is telling Timothy and his fellow pastors is that when they are laboring to raise the harvest of spiritual food with which to feed those they serve, pastors must feed and nourish themselves

with this same food. Any pastor who fails to preach and apply the Word of God to himself in all its fullness will be spiritually malnourished, become weak of faith, and ultimately, will poorly feed those he is called to serve.

2:14 them: These are the faithful men who are able to teach others (cf. v. 2). Those called into the pastoral office and thereby entrusted with the Gospel ministry.

2:14 not to quarrel about words: Understanding and teaching the meaning of certain words can be necessary for the sake of proper hearing and understanding of the faith of the hearers. The kind of quarrels Paul wants pastors to avoid are those that are begun by individuals seeking to use such quarrels to display how intelligent they are and to establish themselves as authoritative teachers. Their purpose is to glorify themselves, and is not for the sake of the hearers. They do not aid those who hear them in their life of faith. It’s like wrestling in the mud with a pig. The problem is that, while the pig enjoys it, you get muddy. The proper understanding of words in the Scriptures cannot be drawn purely from their origins or merely from a dictionary meaning. The understanding must be informed from how the word is used elsewhere in Scripture. When its use is limited in the Scriptures, keys to rightly understanding that word can be found in how it was used in the common language and discourse of the time, as found in other documents.

2:14 ruins the hearers: Such quarreling creates confusion and subverts the simple truths of God’s Word. Uncertainty about the truths of God’s Word serves only to cause doubt and disunity among the hearers. When we do not know the truth in such matters, there is a tendency to attach ourselves to personalities involved. As such, the source of faith is shifted from the Word of God to some person, and faith is quickly ruined. Paul’s words here testify to the fact that such unprofitable quarreling does not take place privately, but publicly, as the self-appointed teacher seeks to establish himself among the hearers. Such quarrels are completely contrary to the responsibility of every pastor and church member to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3) that Christ Himself has established among the saints.

2:15 present yourself: In contrast to the quarrelers who seek after the approval of the people to advance themselves and their agenda, Paul reminds Timothy that he, and every pastor, is to examine himself and his ministry according to what God approves. All pastors are to preach, teach, admonish, exhort, and administer the Sacraments in such a way that what they say and

do, and how they say and do it, has the approval of God. How would Timothy or any other pastor do this? By letting their words and practice of the Gospel ministry flow from what God has said and from what Christ has done and commanded. This may not make Timothy or any pastor popular with the people, but it will be the words and practice that God approves of and blesses.

2:15 approved: Timothy's young age led many to question both what he preached and his authority to do so. Paul is telling Timothy to preach, teach, and do all things as one whom God Himself has called into the pastoral ministry. In the face of opposition, Timothy, like many pastors, was tempted to doubt whether he still had God's approval as a pastor. Paul is telling him to jettison such doubt and get on with fulfilling his vocation of rightly handling the word of truth in love for the sake of the Church he served.

2.15 rightly handling the word of truth. This describes the skillful application of God's Word, in which no provision is made to spare anyone or anything from it. How many people approach and handle the Word of God in such a way that they selectively apply it, so as to spare this person or that, even themselves and their own pet sins. It has to be handled for the salvific sake of the hearer. Can it be said mercifully? Yes, but it cannot be held back from the faithful and full application of it, lest the hearers obtain a false security in their sins. Bengel noted that a similar expression occurs in the Greek translation of Pr 3:6; 11:5: "Timothy may prepare a right course (may make ready a straight way) for the word of truth, and may himself walk straight forward according to this line, turning neither to the right nor to the left hand" (301). Melancthon showed how this verse applies to the teaching of Law and Gospel, saying:

"We tell godly minds to consider the promises, and we teach about free forgiveness of sins and about reconciliation, which happens through faith in Christ. Afterward, we add also the teaching of the Law. It is necessary to distinguish these things aright, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:15. We must see what Scripture says about the Law and what it says about the promises. For it praises works in such a way that it does not remove the free promise." (Ap V 67)

2:19 seal: Based on what is inscribed on the seal, it is a guarantee of permanency on God's firm foundation that makes alteration of any kind impossible.

2:19 The Lord knows ... His: This is a quote from Nu 16:5 in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). The verb "knows" is not a progressive knowing, but a knowing all at once — prior to time — a knowing in eternity. This is what gives the seal its permanency. This particular quote is a reference to the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God (1Pt 1:2). Wesley described those who are the Lord's as "sealed with a seal, which has an inscription on each side," which are the two sayings cited in v. 19. In other words, the one side of the seal describes election, the other side the holy life of those who profess the faith (552).

2:19 Let everyone ... iniquity: As this is an inscription on the permanent seal, this is not something the elect, those whom God has known from eternity, are to do, but it is what they have already done in Christ. According to their regeneration (Ti 3:5), they confess to this command: "I have been made to stand away from sin."

2:22 flee: Literally, "keep on fleeing." The simplest understanding of this word is the activity of moving quickly away from something. By this, Paul is telling Timothy that when it comes to the youthful passions, he is not to tolerate them, but move away from them and toward the Word.

2:22 youthful passions: By this, Paul is not referring so much to sexual passions, but to the emotional escalation and rashness that less mature individuals are given to in disagreements or debates. When in the midst of such situations, Timothy, and every pastor, is to pursue the gifts of faith in Christ that serve to resolve conflicts and win hearts in debates.

2:23 controversies: Literally, "questionings." Paul tells Timothy to avoid the uninformed questions raised by those who lack even a basic understanding of the Christian faith. Those who raise such questions are not seeking any real kind of answer, but rather the opportunity to elevate themselves. They would bring their questions to Timothy seeking his support, and by it, validation of themselves as teachers and authorities.

2:24 servant: The Greek term is *doulos*. Paul uses this term to identify Timothy, himself (Rm 1:1), and every pastor as those who have been purchased by the blood of Christ (1Pt 1:18–19) and owe Him every allegiance and obedience.

CITATIONS: 2 Timothy 2 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*⁶

2 Timothy 2:13:

37. *What are some of God's attributes?*

C. God is faithful (keeping His promises).

88 2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful — for He cannot deny Himself.⁷

2 Timothy 2:15:

10. *What are the two great doctrines of the Bible?*

Law and Gospel are the two great doctrines of the Bible. We must sharply distinguish between the Law and the Gospel in order to understand the Bible rightly.

33 2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.⁸

2 Timothy 2:19

209. *When my sins condemn me and I am doubting, how can I be sure of my forgiveness and salvation?*

I cannot and should not rely on myself in any way — my thoughts, feelings, words, or deeds. ... “This teaching [election of grace] gives no one a cause either for despair or for a shameless, loose life. By this teaching, people are taught that they must seek eternal election *in Christ and His Holy Gospel*, as in the Book of Life. This excludes no penitent sinner, but beckons and calls all

poor, heavy-laden and troubled sinners to repentance and the knowledge of their sins. It calls them to faith *in Christ* and promises the Holy Spirit for purification and renewal. It gives the most enduring consolation to all troubled, afflicted people, so that they know their salvation is not placed in their own hands. ... But salvation is in God's gracious election, which He has revealed to us *in Christ*, out of whose hand no person shall snatch us (John 10:28; 2 Timothy 2:19)” (FC SD XI 89–90 [emphasis added]; see also FC SD XI 43–49).⁹

2 Timothy 2:23–25

254. *How should we deal with those who dishonor God's name?*

A. We should gently admonish those who unknowingly misuse God's name in speech or in teaching.

845 Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

846 2 Timothy 2:23–25 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.¹⁰

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office, and about me as one called to this office?

a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?

- › About His work?
- › About His promises/gifts?

b. About me/others?

- › What have I been given?
- › What I am suppose to do/not do?
- › How am I to do what is given me to do?

c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?

- › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
- › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?

⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

⁷ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 63.

⁸ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 49.

⁹ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 210–13.

¹⁰ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 244–45.

- d. About the Pastoral Office?
- e. About the congregation I serve?
- f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

- 2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

- 3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

- 4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What and/or How ...
 - › I have been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - › I have been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in doing well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

"This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns."¹¹ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

¹¹ LW 43:209.



November 2018

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:
**“Godlessness and
Preaching the Word”** (2 Timothy 3–4)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ...”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, Vol. 43 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:200.

INTRODUCTION: 2 Timothy from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

Second Timothy Introduction

Paul writes from prison in Rome. He has been a prisoner for some time: Onesiphorus, a Christian of Ephesus, had already sought him out and visited him in Rome (2 Ti 1:16–17). There has already been one hearing, at which Paul was deserted by all men and yet, with the Lord's help, so successfully defended himself that he "was rescued from the lion's mouth" (2 Tim 4:16–17). But Paul has no hope of ultimate acquittal; he is at the end of his course. And he is virtually alone; only Luke is with him. He longs to see "his beloved child" Timothy once more and bids him come to Rome before the winter makes travel by sea impossible (2 Ti 1:4; 4:9, 21). But he must reckon with the possibility that Timothy may not reach Rome in time; and so he must put in writing all that he hopes to tell Timothy in person if and when he arrives. The letter is thus, as Bengel has put it, Paul's "last will and testament" in which he bids Timothy preserve the apostolic Gospel pure and unchanged, guard it against the increasingly vicious attacks of false teachers, train men to transmit it faithfully, and be ready to take his own share of suffering in the propagation and defense of it. The most personal of the Pastoral Letters is therefore in a sense "official" too; for Paul cannot separate his person from his office. The man who has been "set apart for the gospel of God" (Ro 1:1) remains one with that Gospel in life and in death. Date of writing: A. D. 65–67.³

God's Grace in 2 Timothy

God's grace is the central message in all of Paul's letters — down to his last letter, 2 Timothy, composed while he

was chained in prison at Rome, knowing that the end was near. As his last will and testament, Paul again encourages Timothy to proclaim the message of God's grace, emphasizing its basic truths. This grace was given us "in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (1:9–10). "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel" (2:8), that "the elect ... may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (2:10), and so "we will also live with him ... we will also reign with him" (2:11–12) and will receive "the crown of righteousness" (4:8).

What an inheritance for Paul to leave to his spiritual son Timothy — the Gospel of God's grace — and for us to leave to our children!

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This epistle is a farewell letter, in which St. Paul exhorts Timothy to go on propagating the gospel, even as he has begun. This is quite necessary, since there are many who fall away; and false spirits and teachers keep springing up all around. Therefore, it is incumbent upon a bishop always to be alert and to work at the gospel.

But he prophesies especially ... concerning the perilous time at the end of the world. It is then that a false spiritual life will lead all the world astray, with an outward show, under which every sort of wickedness and wrong will have its fling. Sad to say! we now see this prophecy of St. Paul all too amply fulfilled in our clergy.⁴

READ: 2 Timothy 3–4 (ESV)

Commentary Excerpts: 2 Timothy 3–4 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁵

3:2–5 The types of people and kinds of behavior Paul describes here have sadly been a part of the Church in every generation to the present. The number and variations have been larger at various times in the history of the Church, always challenging every generation to fight the good fight by rightly handling the word of truth (2:15) for the sake of both pastor and people (1 Tm 4:16).

3:2 lovers of self. These words indicate that problem underlying all the rest. By exalting self above all other things, the self becomes an idol. Such arrogance leads to various sinful expressions such as being proud, arrogant ... ungrateful, unholy. In contrast to this self-centered sinfulness, Luther reflected on the humility of Christ, the prophets, and the apostles:

Christ was spiritually the highest on the earth, for He taught everybody as a teacher and master, but He

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:224.

⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 35, *Word and Sacrament I*, eds. E. Theodore Bachmann and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 389.

⁵ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 99–112.

did not exalt His person over any man, but served them with all that he had and could [cf. Mark 10:45]. The prophets and apostles undoubtedly were also the highest on the earth spiritually, for they were the light and teachers of the world; but when did one of them ever set his person, goods, and affairs over others, to say nothing of over kings and princes?” (LW 76:140–41)

3:5 appearance of godliness. Everything such people said and did publicly (i.e., everything that could be seen) looked exactly like the godliness of believers. Yet when it came to their private lives and choices, none of it flowed from faith in Christ. They were, in fact, unbelievers who, like Ananias and Sapphira (Ac 5:1–11), believed that since they could deceive other people, they could deceive God too. Jesus described the hypocritical Pharisees of His day this way, calling them whitewashed tombs. “You also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Mt 23:27–28).

3:5 Avoid. As Paul tells Timothy to be constantly aware of such people, he also tells Timothy to constantly turn away from such people, lest he give credence to them, their teaching, and their godless self-indulgence (cf. 2Jn 9–11). Timothy, like Paul and every pastor, was still a sinner. This command to keep avoiding such people was also a caution against the opportunity to be tempted by such people and their teachings.

3:8 disqualified. Literally “cast away as unapproved.” These are disqualified as those who are saved by grace through faith because, though they claim a knowledge of God, or even faith in Christ, they are openly rebellious in regard to the will of God and are unrepentant (Ti 1:16). As such, they have, by their unrepentant actions, disqualified or cast out themselves. Luther wrote:

The tyrants among God’s people have the appearance and act as if they were the true saints. Thus they hinder and hold back the simple, so that they cannot get free, for they are weak in conscience and cannot clearly distinguish between appearance and reality, between glittering and truth. ... Thus the Magi were held back at Jerusalem by Herod, who pretended to search the Scriptures. (LW 76:161)

3:13 impostors. The Greek word Paul uses (*goēs*) is found only here in the New Testament. In classical Greek, this word was used to refer to a “juggler,” a “cheat,” or an “enchanter.” Paul uses this term to refer to those who serve to further people in their evil, as the Egyptian magicians served to further Pharaoh in his evil and impenitence (cf. vv. 6–9).

3:13 from bad to worse. While the progression of these impostors will not go far in terms of others, it will progress steadily within themselves. As Paul says, they will deceive, but the greater deception will come from them becoming more deceived within themselves. Such is the orientation of the sinful nature: we are all turned in upon ourselves. Those caught in the illusions of sin will constantly turn within and become progressively more and more deceived in their attempts to deal with the fragments of the Law’s judgment still written on their hearts. Lord, have mercy!

3:15 wise for salvation. Paul singles out the Scriptures as the sole source by which we may be made aware of the sum and substance of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. For people to know what salvation is, how it was accomplished for everyone in Jesus Christ, and how this is received for their salvation, they must hear the Word of God. Only the Scriptures are able to inform in these matters. It is through this informing that people are brought to faith in Christ and strengthened in that faith. And it is through this faith that they are made wise unto salvation. Such is the performative nature of God’s Word. While it informs the hearer, it actually produces an effect. God promises to work through the Scriptures (cf. Ti 1:1).

3:16 teaching. Imparting of knowledge or doctrine that had not been known or understood, so that the hearer may be made wise for salvation that cannot be found anywhere else.

3:16 reproof. This refers to the disproving of falsehoods, myths, and all such ideas that obscure, shade, or reject the full truth of the Gospel in Jesus Christ.

3:16 correction. This ought always follow reproof because it is a setting forth of the truth so as to call people back from their sin, falsehood, and unbelief, that they might repent and believe the Gospel. The goal is the restoration of the sinner.

3:16 training. The Greek word is *paideia* and refers to the exercising of a child through both instruction and discipline.

3:16 training in righteousness. Literally “exercised in righteousness.” The Scriptures are used for exercising those who have been declared righteous. This exercise is twofold. It is first an exercise in receiving the Word through faith, and only then can it be exercised in the second step of responding, through faith, in good works according to our vocations (cf. Heb 12:4–11). This passage receives comparably little comment from the reformers and their heirs, for whom the inspiration of

Scripture was never in doubt. Chemnitz provides an example of the issue they discussed from this passage:

[God] willed that the doctrine [of good works] be repeated in many statements of Scripture, because it is a means and instrument through the hearing of which and the meditation on which He might stir up, kindle, preserve, confirm, increase, and cause to grow a zeal for the Spirit of renewal, or as Paul says, a zeal for good works in the hearts of the regenerate. (8:1179)

3:17 man of God. This phrase is consistently applied to those men who were prophets in service of God. As such, Paul is referring to those whom God has called into the pastoral office. Having said this, it has to be said that Scripture is able to make all believers competent and equipped for every good work of their varied vocations through faith in Christ.

3:17 complete, equipped. God does not call the competent, the self-sufficient, the complete, or the equipped; He makes complete and equips through His Word and Sacraments. Everyone has natural gifts and abilities that God has given, yet apart from Christ, these gifts all lack the completeness to overcome the sin they are captive to, and thus, to be pleasing and acceptable to God. Apart from faith, one's natural gifts are equipped by sin for oneself alone and not for one's neighbor. Only in Christ is a man's personal aptitude taken captive to Christ and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that he is made complete and equipped to serve in the pastoral office.

4:1 charge. Literally, "I am testifying." The full understanding of this has to be drawn from the words of Paul that both precede and follow it. There is an implied "therefore" attached to this word. Because of all false teachers and teachings Timothy was facing, and because he would train other pastors to face and refute them, Paul "testifies" in the presence of God and Christ that pastors are to do the following things. With this word, Paul makes it clear that his command to Timothy, and to every pastor, to preach the Word is not his will or his own concept of ministry, but rather it is the divine will and the substance of the pastoral office that Christ created for the sake of the Church. As such, it is not subject to alteration by addition or subtraction.

4:1 judge the living and the dead. Paul reminds Timothy of the final judgment of the world that will take place at the return of Christ, not as a threat to Timothy, but to identify the reason for the perpetual and unaltered preaching of God's Word. This judgment is coming, and

nothing can stop it. As God would have all men to be saved (1Tm 2:4), so God establishes the preaching office of the pastor so the Gospel may be heard and people may be saved from this coming judgment.

4:2 Here Paul sets forth five imperatives of the pastoral office, the final four of which are some of the fruit and purpose for always preaching the Word for believer and unbeliever. While each of the final four may take different forms in how it is carried out for the sake of the hearers, the substance of each must always be the Word of God.

4:2 reprove. The first part of any attempt to call another person to repentance and faith. This refers to the process of making another person aware of his or her sin by showing it to the person in light of both his or her actions and God's Word (cf. 3:16). The goal of this is that the hearer may have a sound, healthy faith (cf. Ti 1:13). This might be analogous to a physician diagnosing a cancerous tumor for a patient.

4:2 rebuke. This is the second part in the call to repentance. At this point, debate ends. The authority of God's Word of Law is brought to bear on the sin and the sinner. To continue the medical analogy, this might be thought of as a surgeon cutting the cancerous tumor out of a patient.

4:2 exhort. Having given the people the opportunity to repent and receive the forgiveness of sins, pastors are to boldly set before the forgiven the assurance of God's favor in Christ and the will of God for them as the forgiven and justified (Eph 2:10). This may be thought of as a doctor medicating and bandaging the surgical wound from which the cancerous tumor was removed so that the patient is free to go back to life healthy and whole.

4:2 complete patience and teaching. Here, Paul sets forth the two key components to accomplishing the previous three imperatives of reproof, rebuking, and exhorting. Each must be done by "teaching." The Greek word (*didachē*) is also translated as "doctrine," which refers to the process of setting forth all divine truths or facts as found in God's Word, so that the hearer might learn, know, and believe them. While the substance of what the pastor is to teach is fixed, the time required to bring his hearers to the knowledge and faith is not. Therefore, Timothy, and every pastor, is to be patient, leaving room for the Holy Spirit to work through the Word when and where He will in the hearts of the hearers (Jn 3:8).

4:4 myths. The Greek text has the definite article “the” before this word—“the myths.” In this way, Paul is referring to the whole spectrum of empty humanistic, religious, and spiritual inventions of mankind. By using the term “myth,” Paul is stating that all such human teachings, like the sinful desires they sanction, arise from and are sustained by mankind, not by God. Cf. exposition of 1Tm 1:4.

4:5 sober-minded. Peter calls this girding or building up the “loins” or muscles of the mind (1Pt 1:13). Paul is not calling Timothy merely to be sober-minded when necessary, but to continuously be sober-minded and ready—a “continuing to be” so. By this, Paul tells Timothy and every pastor to have continuous clarity of thought and sound judgment. Pastors, even Paul and Timothy, are still sinners and subject to the same temptation and passions that carry others away. Only with a mind exercised in thought and judgment based on the Word of God can any of them attend to their calling to preach and teach the Word for the sake of those inside and outside the Church.

4:5 evangelist. This is not to be understood as some kind of revivalist or missionary. This is used in the general sense and refers to one who is a “good news giver.” As such, an evangelist is one who teaches and preaches

the Law and Gospel of salvation to all, through faith in Jesus Christ.

4:5 fulfill your ministry. From the charge (v. 1) forward, Paul has been putting forth essential imperatives for the work of every pastor. This final imperative is not set down because Timothy has been failing to do this, but in light of those who would turn away from his pastoral ministry; he is not to let this hinder his faithful service as a pastor. Paul is telling Timothy that he must sober-mindedly leave nothing lacking when it comes to fulfilling the previous imperatives, even if it may seem as if it is turning people away. Whether it be reproving, teaching, or exhorting, Pastor Timothy was to faithfully serve for the sake of his hearers both inside and outside of the Church.

4:7 kept the faith. Since Paul is using the definite article “the,” he is referring to the substance of the Christian faith, rather than to his personal faith. Paul begins this verse with the contest chosen for him, then moves to the course upon which this contest has taken place. Through all this, he concludes by stating that he has faithfully proclaimed the substance of the Christian faith. Despite the conflicts, beatings, imprisonments, and temptations, he never yielded any part of the Gospel and the fullness of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Eph 2:1–10).

CITATIONS: 2 Timothy 2 in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*⁶

2 Timothy 3:1–4:

THE LORD’S PRAYER: The Sixth Petition
And lead us not into temptation.

281. *What is the focus of this particular petition?*

It focuses on the constant attempts of our spiritual enemies to lure us away from God and into the captivity of sin, and ultimately into unbelief and despair.

940 **2 Timothy 3:1–4** But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.⁷

2 Timothy 3:15:

6. *Where do we learn about Jesus?*

God’s truth about Jesus Christ is made known in the Bible and is its central message. We call this truth the Gospel, namely, the promise of the forgiveness of sins for Jesus’ sake.

20 **2 Timothy 3:15** From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.⁸

⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

⁷ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 269–70.

⁸ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 46.

2 Timothy 3:16–17:

7. What is the Bible?

The Bible gathers together the writings of God's chosen prophets and apostles over a period of more than a thousand years. Through the Holy Spirit, God Himself gave these writers the thoughts and words they recorded (verbal inspiration), such that the Bible is God's Word. For this reason, the Scriptures are both infallible (incapable of error) and inerrant (containing no mistakes). Holy Scripture is therefore entirely reliable and gives us everything we need to know and believe for Christian faith and life.

- 23 **2 Timothy 3:16–17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.⁹

2 Timothy 4:3–4:

9. Do we use human reason to understand the Bible?

B. Because the Bible is God's Word and, unlike all other books, is inspired and inerrant, it is wrong to use human reason to question or deny its truthfulness.

- 31 **2 Timothy 4:3–4** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.¹⁰

215. What are some of the privileges and responsibilities of members of the Church?

B. We should belong to congregations that confess and teach the pure Word of God.

- 727 **2 Timothy 4:3–4** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.¹¹

2 Timothy 4:18:

223. What happens to me as a Christian when I die?

When I die, the God-given unity of my body and spirit will be broken. I will immediately be in the presence of Christ, in heaven, but my body will remain in the grave until the resurrection.

- 761 **2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.¹²

258. What are the benefits of living under God's gracious rule?

Christ is risen and ascended to the Father's right hand. From there, "He sanctifies those who believe in Him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts to rule, comfort, and make them alive" (AC III 5).

- 870 **2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.¹³

THE LORD'S PRAYER: The Seventh Petition But deliver us from evil.

286. What do we ask God our Father to do for us in this petition?

We ask Him to

C. keep us faithful to Him, free us from this present evil age, and take us to Himself when we die.

- 963 **2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.¹⁴

2 Timothy 4:22:

53. What is valuable about liturgical worship?

Liturgical worship follows this pattern: Christ speaks His Word and gives His Supper; the church receives and answers in confession, thanksgiving, and petition. In this way, the liturgy keeps us focused on Christ (see also "What Is Worship?" in the Appendix).

⁹ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 46–47.

¹⁰ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 48.

¹¹ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 216–217.

¹² Luther, *Small Catechism*, 224–25.

¹³ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 250.

¹⁴ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 275–76.

Note: Basic elements of the Divine Service (for example, from *Lutheran Service Book*, starting on p. 151) include the following:

b. *Service of the Word*

Salutation and Collect of the Day (2 Timothy 4:22)

c. *Service of the Sacrament*

Preface (2 Timothy 4:22; Colossians 3:1; Psalm 136)¹⁵

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office, and about me as one called to this office?
 - a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?
 - › About His work?
 - › About His promises/gifts?
 - b. About me/others?
 - › What have I been given?
 - › What I am supposed to do/not do?
 - › How am I to do what is given me to do?
 - c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?
 - d. About the Pastoral Office?
 - e. About the congregation I serve?
 - f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What and/or How ...
 - › I have been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - › I have been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in doing well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

"This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns."¹⁶ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

¹⁵ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 79–80.

¹⁶ LW 43:209.



December 2018

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:

**“Qualifications, Teaching Sound
Doctrine & Good Works”** (Titus)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ... ?”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, Vol. 43 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:193–211.

INTRODUCTION: Titus from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

Titus Introduction

The Letter to Titus is quite similar to First Timothy in its occasion, purpose, and content and can therefore be treated rather briefly here. Paul had worked for a while as missionary on the island of Crete together with Titus, the prudent, able, and tactful Gentile companion who had rendered him such valuable services at the time when the relationship between the Corinthian church and Paul had been strained to the breaking point (2 Co 2:13; 7:6 ff.; 8:6; 12:18). At his departure from Crete Paul left Titus in charge of the task of consolidating and organizing the newly created Christian communities. His task resembled that of Timothy at Ephesus in that the faith and life of the church were being endangered by the rise of false teachers of a Gnostic type, more pronouncedly Judaic in their teaching than those at Ephesus (Tts 1:14; 3:9). The situation was further complicated in Crete, however, by the fact that in these newly founded Christian communities solid organization was lacking and the pagan environment was particularly vicious (1:5, 12, 13). Whereas Timothy was to restore order in established churches, Titus had to *establish* order in young churches. It was a task which called for all his courage, wisdom, and tact. Paul wrote to Titus to encourage him in his task of organizing and edifying the churches and, not least, to give Titus' presence and work in Crete the sanction and support of his own apostolic authority. This last intention of the letter is evident in the salutation of the letter, which dwells on Paul's apostolate (1:1–3), and in the closing greeting, "Grace be with you *all*" (3:15), which shows that the letter addressed to Titus is intended for the ear of the churches also.

Time and place of writing: about A.D. 63 in Macedonia or en route to Nicopolis.³

God's Grace in Titus

In his letter to Titus, whom he had left in charge of the church on the island of Crete, Paul clearly emphasizes the gospel of God's grace. He begins: "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not

lie, promised before the beginning of time ..." (1:1–2). Paul interrupts his advice on the proper conduct of various groups with a summary of the gospel: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men ... while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness ..." (2:11, 13–14). Later Paul includes another summary of God's grace: "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, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having being justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life" (3:4–7).⁴

Luther on Titus

"This is a short epistle, but a model of Christian doctrine, in which is comprehended in a masterful way all that is necessary for a Christian to know and to live.

"... he [Paul] teaches what kind of man a bishop, or pastor, ought to be, namely, one who is pious and learned in preaching the gospel and in refuting the false teachers of works and of man-made laws.

"... he teaches the various estates—the older, the younger, wives, husbands, masters, and slaves—how they are to act, as those whom Christ, by his death, has won for his own.

"... he teaches Christians to honor worldly rulers and to obey them ... And he forbids association with the obstinate and with heretics" (LW 35:389f.).⁵

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:228.

⁴ *Concordia Self-Study Bible: New International Version*, ed. Robert G. Hoerber (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 1864.

⁵ *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, 1864.

READ: Titus (ESV)

Commentary Excerpts: Titus from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁶

1:1 accords with godliness. Faith comes from hearing the true Gospel, and by the faith given, a knowledge of the truth. God gives this faith according to this truth for a purpose, that we live this faith according to the truth of His Word. We are not saved for ourselves but for Christ and the good works which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:10). Such good works are not left to speculation but flow from the Ten Commandments, and particularly from the Great Commandments—love God and love your neighbor (Mt 22:37–40). While the doing of such good works accords with what is godly, the doing of them does not make one godly. Godliness flows only from faith. The good works of godly living, which faith produces, are for the sake of our neighbor.

1:4 common faith. Referencing the faith, Paul is referring to both the substance of the biblical doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ, and the gift of saving faith they both had been given in Christ through it. In using the adjective “common” to describe the faith they both shared, Paul is emphasizing that their differing ethnicities had no bearing on the fullest unity and communion they shared in Christ. It is in the context of this common faith that the instructions that follow are to be taught and applied, as an instruction and aid to this unity and communion in the mission and ministry of the Church.

1:5 appoint elders. Paul uses the term “elder” to refer to the office of leadership within the Church—what we know today as the pastoral office. These men, when appointed, were charged with the responsibility of caring for and nurturing souls through the faithful teaching and preaching of the Word of God and administration of the Sacraments. Paul also uses the word “overseer” (v. 7) to refer to the same office. Based on the fact that Paul uses these two different words to refer to the same office, he is speaking to different aspects of it. The Greek term for elder (*presbyteros*) literally means “older” or “old man.” Paul uses the word “elder” in regard to qualifications of the office. In the context of vv. 7 and 9, Paul uses the word “overseer” (Gk *episkopos*) in regard to the responsibilities of the pastoral office. With regard to the use of the word *appoint*, Paul is not referring to Titus choosing who will serve in this or that place. As in Acts 14:23, which implies a selection by vote of the

congregation, Titus was to identify qualified men, based upon what is described here, and then put them before the congregation for approval (cf. 2Co 8:19). God, through the congregation, would choose the man He would have to serve as their elder or pastor. Titus was then to appoint them through the laying on of hands (1Tm 4:14), by which these men were then installed in the pastoral office. Melancthon described the duties of those who hold this office, regardless of title, saying:

The Gospel assigns those who preside over Churches the command to teach the Gospel [Matthew 28:19], to forgive sins [John 20:23], to administer the Sacraments, and also to exercise jurisdiction (i.e., the command to excommunicate those whose crimes are known and to absolve those who repent). Everyone confesses, even our adversaries, that this power is common to all who preside over churches by divine right, whether they are called pastors, elders, or bishops. (Tr 60–61).

1:6 above reproach. See exposition of 1Tm 3:2.

1:6 husband of one wife. See exposition of 1Tm 3:2. Luther wrote:

Despite everything that has been said about celibacy, an apostolic bishop elected by God can have a wife. ... [Papists] take it to mean that a diocesan, a parish priest, can have many vicars but cannot have two parishes, and that a bishop cannot have two dioceses at the same time. Are these not shocking and obvious monstrosities? (LW 29:18).

1:7 God’s steward. A pastor is a servant whom God has called from among all His servants to serve as the manager of His estate, as found in the local congregation. He is to manage the wealth of [the] Lord (i.e., His Word and Sacraments) for the sake of the Lord’s estate, the body of believers that are His Church. In this local congregation, the Lord will raise up other servants who will serve under the pastor’s guidance to feed, nurture, and strengthen believers in faith, through other ministers, the words of elders, boards of education, and the like. The sweep of the pastor’s stewardship responsibilities is limited to the care and nurture of souls through His Word and Sacraments.

1:8 self-controlled. The very opposite of what Paul forbids in a candidate for the pastoral office in v. 7. This refers to the ability to stop oneself from refusing to do

⁶ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 161–195.

what God commands and from doing what is contrary to God's Word. While this sounds like an impossibility, a good illustration of this would be found in the life of Joseph (Gn 37; 39–40). Self-control is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit given to work in believers as they live out their lives of faith (Gal 5:22–23).

1:9 as taught. Paul is making it clear to Titus that every pastor, those whom Titus would appoint and those whom God would call until the time of Christ's return, must himself cling to the entire Word of God as it has been taught to him from the Word of God. He cannot, in any point or place, delete this or that part of this trustworthy Word, but he must cling to the whole for his sake and for the sake of his hearers. Only by clinging to the whole Word of God—as taught by the prophets, Christ, and the apostles—will the pastor be able to preach and teach sound or healthy doctrine.

1:9 sound doctrine. Healthy teachings as opposed to false teachings that bring eternal death. See exposition of 1Tm 1:10. Cf. Ti 1:13; 2:1. Calvin wrote:

This is the chief gift in a bishop, who is elected principally for the sake of teaching; for the Church cannot be governed in any way than by the word. ... In a pastor there is demanded not only learning, but such zeal for pure doctrine as never to depart from it.⁷

1:9 rebuke those who contradict it. This refers to the responsibility that every pastor has of putting forth sound doctrine, in an attempt to convict those who oppose it of their error. While it is not the responsibility of any pastor to get such false teachers to admit their error, it is his responsibility to faithfully make the case, by way of sound doctrine, as to why their teaching is false and that of Christ alone is true, for their sake and the sake of believers, lest they be seduced by their errors.

1:11 silenced. Best understood as stopping or muzzling the mouth of the circumcision party (v. 10). What this meant for Titus and for the pastors he would appoint was that they were to preemptively stop such deceivers from speaking in the Church or any worship service. It means the same thing today. While many in Titus's day, as today, might call for an open hearing of all such teachings, God, through the apostle Paul, makes clear that there is to be no such open hearing of any teaching that is contrary to sound doctrine in the Church. The reason for this is that there is absolutely nothing to be gained in faith, and the life of faith, from hearing what is contrary to sound doctrine.

1:13 rebuke ... sharply. Paul charges Titus and the pastors of Crete to bring the full testimony of God's Word to bear, first on the false teaching that it might be proved wrong, and second on those who were teaching it. The fact that Paul states that they are to be rebuked "sharply" means it was to be done without delay and without concession on any point of doctrine.

1:15 To the pure, all things are pure. To understand this, we need to take hold of the second part before the first. All things in creation, apart from fallen mankind, are good. While all is bound under the curse that God placed upon it (Gn 3:17), no created thing, in and of itself, is sinful or evil. Having been purified by God's grace in Baptism, through faith in Jesus Christ, believers have been reborn in the purity of Christ. As a new creation in Christ, we find that everything is clean and good and is to be used for the good of our neighbor. Jesus declares "there is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him" (Mk 7:15). Melancthon wrote, "[Everything is pure] to those who believe in Christ and are righteous by faith" (Ap XXIII 34).

1:15 minds ... consciences are defiled. Jesus says, "out of the heart of man, come evil ... All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person" (Mk 7:21–23). What Paul describes is the condition of an unregenerate heart. A heart that is conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity (Ps 51:5) is defiled and defiles the whole life and conscience of the sinner. As such, sinners came up with all kinds of religious and spiritual rituals, and the like, by which they thought they could remove their defilement. They tried to get others to join them in their false religion because, in the sinful mind, the more followers you have, the more right you must be. Such an idea always appeals to those who have their sinful hearts still bound by the power of sin. It is only through a faithful application of the Law and the Gospel that they shall have any chance for God to create in them a clean heart and give them a right spirit (Ps 51:10). Luther wrote:

In a pure man, ... the conscience has faith, and vice versa. Therefore faith is the purity of conscience, which believes that it is pleasing to God in Christ; on the other hand, a conscience which seeks to please God otherwise and does so without the Word is always uncertain and polluted. On the Last Day its works, vows, and the creatures will all accuse it. (LW 29:46)

⁷ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. The Rev. William Pringle. (Edinburgh, printed for the Calvin Translation Society, 1856), 295.

2:1 sound. See exposition of 1Tm 1:10. Paul here identifies for Titus and every pastor, as he did for Timothy, the primary responsibility in which they are to be constantly engaged for the sake of the Church, her mission, and her ministry in this fallen world.

2:7–8 These expectations reflect Titus's role as pastor, or head elder, as he leads young men into mature Christian discipleship and service.

2:7 Like Pastor Timothy (1Tm 4:12), Pastor Titus is to be a living billboard of what a pastor is to be to those he will appoint and teach to be pastors, as well as to those he will minister to personally. In this way, Titus will set before pastors and laity alike that every believer, no matter his or her vocation or station in life, is to be a model of good works flowing from faith in Christ. See exposition of *example* at 1Tm 4:12. Cf. 1Pt 5:3.

2:8 While Paul is concerned about Titus's credibility, he is more concerned about the need for his preaching and teaching to be faithful, healthy, spiritual food to nourish the faith of the people. Having done this, Titus will have been a living billboard and pattern of how to teach to their pastors, their older men and women, and to every parent.

2:15 these things. Every precept in this chapter that accords with the teaching and practice of sound doctrine (v. 1).

2:15 exhort and rebuke. This refers to both the encouraging of the saints in all that is good, and the reprimanding and correcting of anything that is not good, through the faithful application of both God's Law and Gospel. These are present imperatives, which indicate that Titus is doing both already. This is Paul's way of telling him to "continue in the very thing you've been doing with my full support and blessing." See exposition of "rebuke" at 2Tm 4:2.

2:15 all authority. The only authority Titus and every pastor throughout time has is that which belongs to the Word of God. Because Titus has been appointed a pastor, Christ has given him and every pastor the authority to teach and preach God's Word, as binding upon all people. The authority of the pastor lies solely in what God says in His Word. Therefore, when the pastor speaks the Word of God, it cannot be disregarded, no matter how young, old, feeble, or infirm the pastor might be. Bengel wrote:

The minister of the Divine word, defenceless, unwarlike, is certainly despised by those who do not

submit themselves to the word of God, but think that it is only political defenceless that are of any avail."⁸

3:1 submissive. This refers to the act of putting oneself under another authority. Paul identifies the daily path of faith toward all authorities that God has established for the sake of order and our neighbor (1Pt 2:13–14). Here, he points to the civil authorities that God has established for the sake of His creation. Neither the quality of people in any office of authority, nor their actions, can ever void the believer's responsibility to submit to the authority of the office. To do so is to rebel against God Himself (Rm 13:1–7). Christ Himself did not rebel against the false and corrupt Pharisees when they condemned Him to death in a mock trial. Neither did He refuse to be subject to the unjust death sentence conveyed by a cowardly governor. The redemption that saves us from the corruption of sin and death does not free us from God's created order but puts us back into that order, as examples and witnesses of Christ. Paul here begins a brief listing of every believer's obligation as a citizen to those in authority and to fellow citizens.

3:1 every good work. This echoes Christ's command to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mt 22:21). All good works are done in the context of the various vocations God has called us to. Here, Paul considers each believer's vocation of citizenship. Good works, in this context, would be those lawful things that are commanded by rulers and authorities for citizens to do (Rm 13:4). Of course, this has its limits when such commands violate the Word of God. The calling to good works would certainly include Paul's urging that prayers and intercessions be made for kings and all in authority (1Tm 2:1–3).

3:2 speak evil of no one. Cursing, slander, denunciations, and the like against anyone, those in authority or fellow citizens, is not to be heard from the lips of believers. Every person, no matter his or her character, condition, or actions, is one whom God loves and for whom Christ has died, so that the person might be saved and be one with every believer.

3:2 perfect courtesy toward all people. The Greek word here is *prautēs* and is often translated "meekness" or "gentleness." This refers to dealing with people, not according to how they may have dealt with you, whether good or bad, but gently, according to their needs. Perfect courtesy works because one is warmly welcoming to all so as to offer oneself to their blessing or benefit. Whatever they may have done prior to our offer is for

⁸ John Albert Bengel, *Gnomon on the New Testament*, ed. Andrew R. Fausset, trans. James Bryce, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1858), 323.

Christ to deal with, as is what they may do after our offer of courtesy. Luther wrote:

The law can deal only with the general situation. The head of a household decides that his family should get up at the third hour. This is a general law. But a special case arises if someone in his family has a headache and cannot do this. If [the head of the household] is foolish, he pushes his way through and does not observe *epieikeia* [Gk: gentleness]. He does not soften the rigor of the law.⁹

3:4 when. Paul refers to God's timing in a twofold sense. First, he refers to Christ's coming in human flesh as the Son of God and the Son of Man to save all mankind (Jn 3:16). Second, Paul is referring to this same Christ appearing to them, personally and individually, in His Word and Sacraments, through which He has saved them. Paul's reference to timing serves as a good reminder to Titus and all pastors that conversion of the heart, as the work of God alone, takes place according to His timing. This is a warning against attempting to force the conversion of someone. The pastor's charge is to preach and teach God's Word of Law and Gospel; it is God's work to bring hearers to faith, as it is His to make them new creations in Christ.

3:8 The saying. Paul is referring to everything in every aspect of what he has just stated in vv. 4–7. See exposition at 1Tm 1:15.

3:8 devote themselves. Here, we see the intended consequence or result of what God has done (vv. 4–7) for each believer in Jesus Christ. The goal here is not merely that we have a new and eternal life in Christ, but that this new life be lived in this world through faith, so that we might be conformed to the image of Christ (Rm 8:29), who came not to be served but to serve (Mt 20:28). This active devoting of oneself is not by way of a maintenance program of good works, but as a matter of always zealously taking the lead in doing and getting them done (2:14). Such is what each believer has been regenerated in Christ Jesus to do (Eph 2:10). In this way, the believers will be better able to avoid what ought to be avoided (v. 9).

3:10–11 Here Paul directs Titus and the Church as to how to deal with those who unrepentantly teach, preach, and demand that which is contrary to sound doctrine. Unchecked by the Word of God and repentance, such false teachers harden themselves in their heresy and create divisions within the Church.

Where one is unrepentant to the rebuke of the pastor, that person must be brought before the Church, and if still unrepentant, must be put out of the Church. This means far more than merely not letting them in the building. This process is known as excommunication. It happens when a person, after proper admonition (Mt 18:15–18), refuses to repent of teaching, preaching, and actions that continue contrary to the biblical doctrines he confesses to believe. Because of their unrepentance, such persons are publicly judged as separated from the Church, because their actions are willfully contrary to the biblical faith of the Church. The key in this is not that they have sinned, but that they refuse to repent, and willfully continue in their sin to their detriment and that of the Church. The goal is not to get rid of such a person but to awaken this person to the real and dire condition he has placed himself in through lack of repentance and unbelief in the Word.

3:10 who stirs up divisions. This descriptive phrase is a single word in Greek: *hairetikos*, from which we get our English word “heretic.” This is the only use of this word in the New Testament, though it is known in other Greek literature. Wesley wrote:

This is the only place in the whole Scripture where this word heretic occurs; and here it evidently means a man that obstinately persists in contending about foolish questions, and thereby occasions strifes and animosities, schisms and parties in the Church.”¹⁰

3:10 after warning ... have nothing more to do with him. Every pastor who is called to the care of souls through preaching and teaching of God's Word, like Titus, must deal with all false teaching and teach teachers. Here, Paul sets down the path and pattern Christ Himself commanded (Mt 18:15–17). While this is for the sake of that person, it is also for the sake of the Church lest pastor or people be tempted (Gal 6:1). With regard to having nothing to do with them, John states that if believers receive such false teachers into their homes or greet them, those believers are taking part in their wicked works (2Jn 1:10–11). Cf. Rm 16:17. Through the centuries, the Church has acknowledged the importance of these matters. Irenaeus said: “Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth” (ANF 1:416). Melancthon reiterated: “Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and condemned as cursed” (Tr 41). Calvin

⁹ *Gnomon on the New Testament*, 323.

¹⁰ John Wesley, M.A., *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament*, (London, 1755), 560.

also wrote about the importance of dealing with false doctrine while urging care lest these teachings be misapplied:

There is a common and well-known distinction between a heretic and a schismatic. But here, in my opinion, Paul disregards that distinction: for, by the term “heretic” he describes not only those who cherish and defend an erroneous or perverse doctrine, but in general all who do not yield assent to the sound doctrine which he laid down a little before. Thus under this name he includes all ambitious, unruly, contentious persons, who, led away by sinful passions, disturb the peace of the Church, and raise disputings. ... But we must exercise moderation, so

as not instantly to declare every man to be a “heretic” who does not agree with our opinion.¹¹

3:11 warped. Literally “turned out from.” Paul uses this word to describe such persons according to what they have done. Such persons have, by their turning away from the truth of biblical doctrine, become separated from Christ and thus His Body, the Church.

3:11 self-condemned. This happens not because heretics simply believe something that is false, but because they have heard the truth multiple times, and still have the biblical truth that refutes their error, so that they might repent and be saved; yet they willfully refuse to believe it, preferring their own erroneous and false ideas.

CITATIONS: Titus in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*¹²

Titus 1:9:

The Power of Baptism

254. How should we deal with those who dishonor God’s name?

B. We should firmly rebuke those who persist in their errors and refuse to repent.

847 **Titus 1:9** He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Titus 2:11–14:

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

68. How do we fear and love God in keeping the Sixth Commandment?

We fear and love God by living as men and women who respect God’s purposes for marriage.

Note: In marriage vows, a husband and wife promise to love each other “for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health” until death separates them.

Read **Genesis 2:23; 1 Corinthians 7:1–11; Ephesians 5:21–33; and Titus 2:11–14.**

Titus 2:14:

162. What are we saying when we confess that Jesus has redeemed us?

We acknowledge that Jesus has rescued and reclaimed us from powers we cannot overcome.

522 **Titus 2:14** [Jesus] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

The Second Article (Part 3)

177. What does it mean to confess that I belong to Christ?

I am united with Him by faith so that He is mine and I am His.

587 **Titus 2:14** [Christ] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

The Third Article (Part 1)

190. What does it mean to be sanctified by the Spirit?

B. The Holy Spirit then sanctifies me by strengthening my faith and increasing its fruit within my life. He gives me new desires so that I strive to overcome sin and do good works.

¹¹ *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, 341–42.

¹² Martin Luther, *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

633 **Titus 2:14** [Jesus] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

Titus 3:1:

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

55. How do we fear and love God in keeping the Fourth Commandment?

We fear and love God by *receiving and recognizing* parents and authorities as His representatives. We do this by

D. loving and cherishing our parents and other authorities on account of their God-given vocations.

Read **Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 23:22–24; 1 Timothy 2:1–4; and Titus 3:1.**

Titus 3:5:

The Third Article (Part 1)

189. What does it mean that I am enlightened with His gifts?

Christ is made known to me by means of the Spirit's gifts of the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper (the Means of Grace).

Note: The written and spoken Word of the Gospel and the Sacraments are called the Means of Grace. Some of the passages that describe how the Holy Spirit uses these means include **Isaiah 55:10–11; John 17:20; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23; Titus 3:5; John 20:22–23; and Matthew 26:27–28.**

The Third Article (Part 1)

190. What does it mean to be sanctified by the Spirit?

B. The Holy Spirit then sanctifies me by strengthening my faith and increasing its fruit within my life. He gives me new desires so that I strive to overcome sin and do good works.

633 **Titus 2:14** [Jesus] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

The Third Article (Part 1)

194. Why do we confess the Holy Spirit as God?

The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Creator of the universe together with the Father and the Son. He has

divine attributes and does divine works (for example, see **Hebrews 9:14 and Titus 3:5**).

The Power of Baptism

318. Are we to seek a “baptism with the Holy Spirit” in addition to Holy Baptism?

No, the Holy Spirit works through the one Baptism instituted by Christ.

B. Christian Baptism is not a water-only or a Spirit-only baptism, but a Baptism of water and the Holy Spirit.

1023 **Titus 3:5** He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5–6:

What Baptism Indicates

323. What words do we use to remember our Baptism?

We remember our Baptism with the words “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (**Matthew 28:19**)—the trinitarian invocation. When we use these words in the Divine Service or in our prayers (for example, Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers), we recall and confess before heaven, earth, and hell all that God has given us in our Baptism: “victory over death and the devil [**Romans 6:3–6**], forgiveness of sin [**Acts 2:38**], God's grace [**Titus 3:5–6**], the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts [**1 Corinthians 6:11**]” (LC IV 41).

Titus 3:5–7:

The Blessings of Baptism

308. What great things does God do through Baptism?

C. God gives eternal salvation.

1009 **Titus 3:5–7** He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:5–8:

The Power of Baptism

316. Why is Baptism called “the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit”?

The Holy Spirit works in and through Baptism to create faith in Christ Jesus, adopting us as children of the Father and making us new creatures in Christ who now live not according to the flesh but by the Spirit.

1017 **Titus 3:5–8** He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these

things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

Titus 3:10:

THE LORD’S PRAYER: The First Petition
Hallowed by Thy name.

254. How should we deal with those who dishonor God’s name?

848 **Titus 3:10** As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him.

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office, and about me as one called to this office?
 - a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?
 - › About His work?
 - › About His promises/gifts?
 - b. About me/others?
 - › What have I been given?
 - › What I am supposed to do/not do?
 - › How am I to do what is given me to do?
 - c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?
 - d. About the Pastoral Office?
 - e. About the congregation I serve?
 - f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God’s Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God’s Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God’s Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - b. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in doing well?

Praying God’s Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

“This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God’s word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns” (LW 43:290). May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

January 2019

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:
**“False Teachers &
The Work of Christ”** (1 Timothy 1)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ... ?”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 43, *Devotional Writings II*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:200.

INTRODUCTION: 1 Timothy from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

First Timothy Introduction

Paul, on his way to Macedonia, has left Timothy at Ephesus with instructions to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (1 Ti 1:3). Paul does not describe this “different doctrine” systematically; but from his attacks on it in 1:3–7; 4:1–3, 7; 6:3–5, 20–21 and from the tenor of his instructions for the regulation of the life of the church, it is clear that Timothy must do battle with a form of “Gnosticism,” an early stage of that heresy which was to become in its fully developed form the most serious threat to the church in succeeding generations. Gnosticism is not so much a system as a trend or current of thought which produced a great variety of systems, often by combining with some already existing religion. It was therefore present and active as a corrupting force long before the great Christian-Gnostic systems of the second century appeared; we have already seen one example of it in the heresy which threatened the church at Colossae.

Basic to all forms of Gnosticism is a dualistic conception of reality, that is, the view that what is spiritual, nonmaterial, is of itself good and what is material or physical is of itself bad. This view affects man’s whole attitude toward the world of created things. The dreary details of Gnostic speculation on the *origin* of the material universe need not concern us here. It may suffice to note:

- a. that the world is no longer viewed as God’s good creation, as the Scriptures view it (that is, a world which God created, fallen with fallen man but redeemed with man and destined to be transfigured with him, Ro 8:19–22); rather, the created world is viewed as in itself alien and hostile to God because it is matter and not spirit;
- b. that man’s desperate predicament, his alienation from God, is no longer seen as being due to his sinful rebellion against God, but to the fact that he is entangled in the world of matter;
- c. that redemption consists in being freed from the material world in which man dwells and is entangled. This liberation can come about only by knowledge (Greek, *gnosis*, hence the name of the heresy); this knowledge must be imparted to man by revelation from a higher world;
- d. the mission of the Savior-God is to impart this knowledge not to all men, but to a select few who will pass it on to those who are “worthy”;
- e. that those who have knowledge, the “gnostics,” must free themselves from the influence of matter by abstaining from certain foods and from marriage. (Sometimes the negative attitude toward things physical and material had the opposite effect and led to a supreme indifference to things physical and material, so that, for instance, the sexual life of man was considered to be morally indifferent.)

Such a trend of thought would lead inevitably to an utter distortion of all that “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Ti 1:11) proclaimed. God the Creator disappears—all the good gifts of food and drink which He gives are suspected and feared; all the salutary orders which He has established in this world (marriage, family, government) are despised and ignored. The Old Testament, which rings with glad adoration of the God who made the heavens and the earth and blesses man within the orders of this world, must either be ignored or have its obvious sense interpreted away by allegorizing “myths and endless genealogies.” The Law becomes the arena of speculation and vain discussions, not the voice of God which calls the sinner to account and condemns him. In terms of this kind of thought, there can be no real incarnation of the Son of God; for how can the divine, which is spiritual, enter into union with matter, which is of itself evil? And when sin is not recognized as man’s guilt, there can be no real redemption either. Where knowledge is made central in the religious life of man and self-redemption by way of ascetic exercise is made the way of salvation, there is no possibility of that pure Christian love that “issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1:5). A narrow and sectarian pride takes its place (1 Ti 6:4, 20; cf. 1:3–7). Where the teaching office becomes a wordy, speculative, disputatious purveying of “knowledge” to a select coterie of initiates, it is bound to become corrupted; it appeals to the pride, selfishness, and mercenary instincts of men, and the teacher becomes that ghastly, demon-ridden caricature of the true teacher which Paul has described in 1 Ti 4:1–2.

Timothy’s task will be to let the fresh and wholesome winds of “sound doctrine” into the house of God, whose air has been infected by the morbid and infectious mists of this *gnosis*. To the demonic denial of God the Creator and the rejection of His good gifts he must oppose the glorious Gospel of the blessed God “who gives life to all things” (1 Ti 6:13), the God whose every creation still has on it the mark of His primeval “Very good!” (Gn.

1:31) and is even in its fallen state “consecrated by the word of God and prayer” (1 Ti 4:5). To “godless and silly myths” he is to oppose the grateful adoration of the Creator. To the Gnostic misuse of the Law he must oppose the right and lawful use and let the sinner hear the fearful verdict of God in order that he may give ear to God’s acquittal in His Gospel (1:8–11).

To the rarefied and unreal Christ of Gnostic speculation he must oppose “the *man* Christ Jesus” (1 Ti 2:5), the Christ Jesus who really entered into history under Pontius Pilate (1 Ti 6:13) and died a real death on the cross for the sins of all men (1 Ti 2:6). He must present this Christ as the whole content of the truth which the church upholds and guards, the mystery of God “manifested *in the flesh*” (1 Ti 3:16). To Gnostic self-redemption by means of knowledge and ascetic self-manipulation he must oppose redemption as the sole act of the Christ who came into the world, not to impart higher knowledge but “to save sinners” (1 Ti 1:15), the Christ “who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Ti 2:6). To Gnostic exclusiveness he must oppose the all-embracing grace of God, and to their narrow sectarian pride he must oppose the Gospel of universal grace (1 Ti 2:4) and thus make of the church a church which can pray wholeheartedly for *all* men (1 Ti 2:1), a church which lives in the “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1).

To the imposing picture of the Gnostic teachers, these brilliant, speculative, disputatious, and mercenary men, he must oppose the picture of the true teacher. He must, first of all, himself *be* that picture; he dare not let himself be drawn down to the level of his opponents and fight demonic fire with fire; he must do battle, “holding faith and a good conscience” (1 Ti 1:19); he must, as a good minister of Jesus Christ, not allow himself to be infected by what he opposes but must continue to be “nourished on the words of faith” (not knowledge) “and of the good doctrine” which he has followed hitherto. He must train himself, athlete-like, in godliness (1 Ti 4:6–7). Thus he will be able to fight the good fight of faith as a “man of God,” standing in the succession of Moses and the prophets, singly devoted to God’s cause (1 Ti 6:11–12; cf. 6:3–10), taking hold even now of that eternal life which shall be his in fullness at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Ti 6:11–15). He must himself be all that the Gnostic teachers are not; and he is to see to it that the men who oversee the church’s life and administer the church’s charity, the bishops and deacons, are men of like character. They need not be brilliant men; they must be good men. It is enough if a bishop be “an apt

teacher” (1 Ti 3:2); he need not be a brilliant speaker or a captivating personality. The qualifications which Paul sets up for bishops and deacons are singularly sober and down to earth; but the moral standards which he sets up for them are awesomely high (1 Ti 3:1–13). Paul wants men whom the grace of God has “trained,” as he puts it in his Letter to Titus (2:11–12), seasoned, selfless, wise, and gracious men whose faith has borne fruit in their homes, in their marital fidelity, and in the training of their children (1 Ti 3:2, 4, 12).

Timothy had a great piece of work assigned to him. And he was a good man for the task. He was both Jew and Greek (Acts 16:1). He had lived with the Old Testament from childhood (2 Ti 3:15). Prophetic voices had assigned him to this “good warfare” (1 Ti 1:18). God had given him the requisite gifts for it (1 Ti 4:14), and his whole history had been one that fostered those gifts. He had been Paul’s almost constant companion for a dozen years (Acts 16:1 ff.). The apostolic “pattern of sound words” (2 Ti 1:13) had become a part of his makeup, and the apostolic example had been constantly before him (2 Ti 3:10, 11, 14). Paul had employed him as his emissary before this, though never for so extended and difficult a mission as this one. When Paul was prevented from returning to Thessalonica, he sent Timothy to the young and troubled church to establish the believers in their faith and to exhort them (1 Th 3:1–2). He had sent Timothy to Corinth during that troubled period when the Corinthians were becoming drunk on the heady wine of the new teaching, to remind them of the apostle’s “ways in Christ” (1 Co 4:17; 16:10). He had sent him to Philippi from Rome during the time of his imprisonment and had commended him to the Philippians with the finest tribute that can be paid to a servant of God in the Gospel: “I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy’s worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel” (Ph 2:20–22).

If Paul was a fond father to Timothy, he was not a blind one. He knew his beloved child’s weaknesses: Timothy was still young and apparently conscious of it as a handicap (1 Ti 4:12). He was inclined to be timid (cf. 1 Co 16:10–11; 2 Ti 1:7). Besides, his health was not of the best; his stomach troubled him, an ailment not uncommon among sensitive and conscientious young men of God (1 Ti 5:23).

Therefore Paul writes Timothy a letter which sums up once more the oral instructions already given him (1 Ti 1:3). This letter will give his work the sanction

and authority of Paul, “an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Ti 1:1). Paul is in effect telling the church of Ephesus what he had once told the Corinthians: “He is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. So let no one despise him” (1 Co 16:10–11).³

God’s Grace in 1 Timothy

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to proclaim God’s grace. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminds him of the essential elements of this message. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men” (2:5–6). “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (3:16). “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1:15) and is “the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe” (4:10).

Paul himself found the gospel of God’s grace to be the source of spiritual strength, faith and love (1:12–14). He

encourages Timothy to put his trust and hope in the same message.⁴

Luther on 1 Timothy

“This epistle St. Paul writes in order to provide a model to all bishops of what they are to teach and how they are to rule Christendom in the various stations of life, so that it may not be necessary for them to rule Christians according to their own human opinions.

“... he charges that a bishop keep true faith and love and resist the false preachers of the law who, beside Christ and the gospel, would also insist on the works of the law. In a brief summary, he comprehends the entire Christian doctrine concerning the purpose of the law and the nature of the gospel.

“... he gives orders as to how widows and young women should be looked after, and which widows are to be supported from the common funds; also how godly bishops or priests are to be held in honor, and blameworthy ones punished” (LW 35:388).⁵

READ: 1 Timothy 1

Commentary Excerpts: 1 Timothy 1 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁶

Introduction to 1:1–2 Although Timothy had long been an assistant to Paul in his ministry, he was alone now in his pastorate in Ephesus. He will have to act there without Paul’s presence. This letter gives Timothy authoritative instruction on how to faithfully carry out his pastoral charge for his own sake and that of his hearers (1Ti 4:16). Even though Paul references his apostleship in this letter, as in his others, here he directs both Timothy and his hearers back to the ultimate source of authority, Jesus Christ. The referencing of God and of Jesus Christ is not redundancy, but a confession of where all true ministry comes from, who it comes through, and through whom it is carried out.

1:1 apostle. Paul uses this term in the narrower sense of those whom the Lord Jesus Christ Himself personally called and sent with His full authority. The very meaning

of the word (“sent one”) excludes any idea that it is an office one takes on themselves and of their own authority.

1:1 Christ Jesus. Paul speaks of Jesus first according to His office as Christ, or Messiah, and then according to His name: Jesus. While this is not the usual order, the word change serves to emphasize the authoritative nature of Paul’s calling to the office of apostle, and indirectly, to Timothy’s office as a pastor. This emphasis on authorization serves to provide the pastoral office with both authority to speak and the limitations of what can be spoken authoritatively.

1:1 command. It is very likely that Timothy will share this letter with other pastors and congregations beyond the churches in Ephesus. Having had to defend his apostolic authority before with other congregations, Paul steps up his terminology here to stress his apostolic charge from God the Father and God the Son (Ac 26:15–18).

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:216–18.

⁴ Robert G. Hoerber, ed., *Concordia Self-Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 1847.

⁵ Hoerber, *Concordia*, 1847.

⁶ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 9–28.

1:2 mercy. When Paul writes to the churches, his greeting is “grace to you and peace”; writing to Timothy, he adds “mercy.” Having mercy follow in the wake of grace, Paul emphasizes the tender quality of grace, especially toward the unconverted and hostile. Only by being a constant recipient of God’s mercy is anyone able to faithfully carry out the ministry of the Gospel.

1:3 remain at Ephesus. Timothy had come to Ephesus to meet and join Paul, who had just set out from Rome on his fourth missionary journey. Paul was heading to Macedonia as he promised in Php 2:24. Seeing the situation, Timothy believed they both needed to stay and stifle the false teachers and, further, to teach the faith and spread the Gospel. In all his missionary journeys, Paul had stayed the longest at Ephesus. Led by the Holy Spirit and his familiarity of the situation, Paul has Timothy stay. Through the exercise of his pastoral office, Timothy is to stop those who were teaching false doctrine, devotion to myths, and other such things that obscure the Gospel and lead to speculation. The key to this was a clear and constant proclamation of both God’s Law and His Gospel. There is nothing to suggest that Timothy did not want to stay and take the charge when Paul initially gave it to him. Now something has changed, and Timothy believes that he is able to move on. Whether it is to go and be with Paul, or to pursue some other missionary endeavor, we do not know. Paul learns of this and turns Timothy back to his initial calling given to him in Paul’s charge to remain. False teachers and perverters of the Gospel persist, and Timothy must continue in his calling to stop them with biblical doctrine for the sake of the elect.

1:3 charge. While the term seems to carry a stern tone, the basis and the aim of it is love (v. 5). What the Lord says has absolute authority (1Co 7:10). This authority is the basis of Paul’s charge, and it is the basis of both Timothy’s charge (1:3–4) and the charge he as pastor would give to the false teachers, the widows, and the rich.

1:4 stewardship from God. Everything in the Church is to be directed toward distribution of God’s two great words: the Word of the Law and the greater Word of the Gospel. The purpose for this faithful distribution is for the salvation of all: those in the Church and those yet to be converted. Christ Himself gave this stewardship to the Church in the Great Commission (Mt 28:19–20). These false teachers and their mythical embellishments take the eyes and the energies of the Church off the Great Commission. They attempt to have the Church take up matters and agendas not given them by Christ or the Gospel. Whenever people, even in the Church, take

to themselves responsibilities and teachings not given to them by God, they will only get in the way of the work God has given them to do.

1:5 our charge. Their charge has a purpose totally other than themselves and their welfare. The fact that everything they were to do had *love* as its goal was entirely bound up in the eternal benefit and blessing of others. This is no mere romantic or emotion-based care and concern. The word for “love” in the Greek used here is “agape.” It is a love that flows from God in Jesus Christ and aims all things toward the eternal welfare of those in need. Having given them this charge with the aim of love, God gives them the means of reaching their aim of love by giving them His Word, which is God’s expression of love, and thus God’s work of love. Their goal was the conversion of the lost and the building up of the saints. The only means to this is, as Paul says in Ephesians, “speaking the truth in love” (4:15) in Baptism, Absolution, the Lord’s Supper, preaching, and teaching. Paul contrasts their selfless, love-for-neighbor mission and ministry with the self-seeking and self-aggrandizing ways of individuals whose motive is love of self. What follows in this letter is an exposition of this charge and its aim—love.

1:5 from a pure heart ... sincere faith. We know what it is to have a guilty conscience, as well as a want to ease our conscience by doing something good in the hope that we might “make up for our wrong.” Paul is making it clear that everything he says and does has no such self-serving motive. Every pastor is to preach the Gospel from such a clean conscience, cleansed in the forgiveness of Christ to teach, preach, speak, and serve for the good and eternal welfare of the Church and the world. Such purity and sincerity of faith can come only through faith in Jesus Christ. Of some who would argue that Paul places greater emphasis on love than on faith, Calvin wrote: “They who are of that opinion reason in an excessively childish manner; for, if love is first mentioned, it does not therefore hold the first rank of honour, since Paul shews also that it springs from faith” (27).

1:6 Certain persons. Paul narrows the group of those Timothy is to stop to those who have departed from the three things Paul lists in v. 5, love (*agapē*), a pure heart, and a sincere faith. To be dedicated to, and do all things for the eternal welfare of others would require a denial of self they were unwilling to make. This insertion of self into the ministry taints the conscience that must justify and serves to justify or clear the conscience. To achieve

this tainted and impure end, they have to trust in tainted and impure teachings.

1:6 vain discussion. When the Gospel is modified for any reason, it ceases to be the Gospel, the pure gift of God and His complete and total means of saving the sinner. It may sound good, even godly, and its goal may be lofty and holy, but, having become the word of man, it becomes vain because its goal is not love; its means is not the love and grace of God and neither is it a faith in Christ alone. Such talkers become like some of the friends of Job with whom the Lord said: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has” (Jb 42:7).

1:8–10 This passage is the source of the “uses of the Law,” which became so important to the Reformation theology of Law and Gospel. Chemnitz wrote:

Luther in a very learned way sought the foundations of this doctrine in the Epistle to the Galatians, and divided the use of the Law into one aspect which was civil and one which was theological. Likewise in Galatians 5 there is one use of the Law in justification and another for those who have been justified. From this Luther constructed the threefold division of the uses of the Law (8:805).

1:8 the law is good. This statement is not one of mere opinion on the part of Paul. Paul is speaking of God’s Law, which is good in and of itself because it is the divine will of God. While one’s use of the Law cannot take away from its intrinsic goodness, one can use it in a way that is contrary to God’s purpose in giving it. The Law of God is always in service of the Gospel, to lead people to a realization of their sinfulness and prepare them for the Good News in Christ. For Christ came not to get rid of the Law, but to fulfill the Law for us and for our total salvation (Mt 5:17–19). Timothy was going to have to correct those who were using the Law in service of their own heresies and agendas. As pastors, Timothy and Titus were not to argue about the Law (Ti 3:9) but speak it in all its truth and fullness that it might make their hearers ready for the Good News of the Gospel.

1:9–10 What follows are six couplets corresponding to the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1–17) that labeled a person according to his or her own sin. The first word of each is followed by its consequence. These couplets progress from the general to the more specific types of lawless persons. While the Law shows us God’s holy will for us and our lives, it cannot show us this without also showing us where we are not right with His will.

In this way, the Law serves as a mirror with which we examine ourselves and our doings. Where we are not right with the will of God as expressed in the Law, there is sin, and there is lawlessness. It is here that Law serves its intended purpose of working contrition (sorrow or regret) and repentance (a turning away from the sin) to the mercy and grace of God offered us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1:9 law ... for the lawless. Apart from Christ, the only basis for a relationship with God and one’s neighbor is the Law. The only means of insuring a right relationship is by everything being measured, weighed, and checked. Where it is lacking in any detail, the relationship is not right (it is unrighteous), thus the person has been, and is, lawless. For the relationship to be saved, something has to be done to make every detail of the relationship right again. Having lost much of the Law and a right understanding of it due to the fall into sin, the Law is laid upon the lawless so that they might know themselves and their relationships to God and their neighbor according to the will and judgment of God. God’s Word, both Law and Gospel, names everything as God names it, so that we might know ourselves as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier knows us. The lawless do not know themselves as God knows them, and the Law serves to show this to them. This is why Paul names them (vv. 9–11) and names the judgment upon them for being lawless. Only in this way will they be ready to hear the Gospel as the blessed good news of a new relationship with God, according to Christ rather than the Law.

1:10 sound doctrine. To refute and correct these false teachers, Timothy’s teaching (doctrine), like that of all pastors, has to be sound (healthy). Only this way can false teachers be corrected and refuted in a manner that is aimed at their conversion and the further spiritual growth of the Church. Healthy faith, hope, peace, and trust all require healthy teaching. How does a pastor work to ensure that his doctrine (teaching) is sound (healthy)? By limiting his teaching to God’s Word, and his exposition of God’s Word, to the full testimony of Scripture in accordance with the Gospel (v. 11). Paul, Timothy, Titus, and all pastors, as undershepherds of Christ, are servants of His Word, not their own. John admonishes believers to “test” every spirit—that is, every word of teaching put forth as God’s Word—because false prophets have gone out (1Jn 4:1). The only right way to test any teaching is to put it against the Word of God to see if it is of God. Timothy and every pastor preaches and teaches for the sake of sharing and strengthening the

faith of their hearers. As servants of the Word, they are to take the lead in testing their teaching to ensure that what they teach and preach as God's Word in service of the Gospel is God's Word and not their own word or the word of another person.

1:11 entrusted. While it may sound like Paul is pulling rank here, that is not what he is saying. Having been called and charged by God as His apostle, Paul seeks to be faithful to his charge, and he seeks that same faithfulness on the part of Timothy and all pastors according to their calling and office as servants of God's Word. Paul does this by humbly acknowledging that this calling and charge were not of himself but from God in service of the Gospel. All sound (healthy) doctrine (teaching) depends on faithfulness of the pastor in the exercise of the office, according to his divine call. Only in this way will believers have a sound (healthy) faith.

1:12–17 While it seems that Paul is patting himself on the back, he is doing something much more significant. By naming himself for what he was in unbelief, prior to receiving mercy and grace in Jesus Christ, Paul radically differentiates himself from all the would-be teachers in the entire Ephesian Church. With regard to one's standing before God, Paul makes the case that he is the worst of sinners. In contrast, the would-be teachers made the case that they were the best of God's people. When identifying the basis of God's calling and charge to him as an apostle, Paul points to the same grace of God that saved him. The would-be teachers point to themselves, their experience, their ancestry, and their masterful eloquence. This radical difference points directly at the radically different nature of the God of the Gospel, against the god of the false would-be teachers. The living God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—doesn't save or call the qualified, He alone qualifies the lost in Christ. He does this so that they might be saved, thus giving them qualities for the service of the Gospel. All this God does out of the pure love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:12 judged me faithful. Paul knows full well that he was not sufficient of himself for the faithful discharge of his calling as an apostle of the Lord. "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant" (2Co 3:5–6). Since the Lord Jesus made Paul a new creation in Himself, He considered Paul to be faithful because of the faithfulness He gave him and would work through him. While there are many qualities that make for a good pastor, faithfulness to the whole Word of God is

absolutely critical if the people those pastors serve are to know God and His salvation in Jesus Christ.

1:12 service. Having called Paul to the office of apostle, the Lord Jesus was putting Paul in His own place, to speak what Jesus has given him to speak through the Holy Spirit. To be in the Lord's service is to be about the Lord's Word and work.

1:14 When it comes to the salvation of the lost, God's mercy and grace might be likened to the two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable. Where God's mercy deals with us according to what is lacking, His *grace* undeservedly and freely does for us all we cannot do to be holy and right before Him. In light of the reality of Paul's past, it is undeniably clear that the motive and reason for God doing this to save him lay completely in God and His grace.

1:14 overflowed. In his attempt to describe himself prior to his conversion, Paul lists his "big" sins. As one made alive in Christ, he has become more aware of the totality of his sinfulness. Every believer has some measure of his or her sinfulness, the seeming limitlessness of it in shape, size, quality, and quantity. We have this measure by revelation of the Word, and we know it in some degree because we have experienced it. In the face of his mountain range of sins that went beyond memory and sight, the grace of God is constantly given in an amazingly abundant manner to Paul and to every believer. This grace brings low every mountain of sin and goes beyond every range of sin to remove sin as far as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12). This is often doubted by many because the memory and awareness of actual sin lies heavy on the heart and mind. What is forgotten is that the grace of God is not a one-time gift but is an ongoing work of God alone in which we live every day through faith in Jesus Christ.

1:15 I am the foremost. These words are true in and of themselves, for Paul was a murderous persecutor of the Church. They state the subjective truth that applies to Paul alone, according to his understanding of himself. Putting himself forth as the worst of sinners, and backing it up with some measure of truth, would create only the question in the hearers as to how he could possibly have become an apostle and leader among the saints—a question that he will answer.

1:16 I received mercy for this reason. Paul is a living example of the greatness of the love and mercy of God for all who are in Jesus Christ. He is a living message that no one is beyond the power of God's mercy. He can change sinners of all kinds, remaking them anew as

saints in the one Lord Jesus Christ. Having described his radical sinful opposition to Christ and the Church (vv. 12–13a), Paul is confronted by something radically unexpected. Rather than receiving the justice he deserves for his sin and evil, Christ blesses Paul with what he does not and could never deserve: mercy. Not just any mercy, but radical mercy that works a radically complete change in Paul. He who was the worst sinner (v. 15) is changed into a holy saint, all by the power of God's mercy and grace in Jesus Christ.

1:16 display His perfect patience. Paul is inspired to describe the patience God displayed in his life as perfect. He does this not so much to express the quality of God's patience but to express that God's patience achieved God's goal with Paul—his conversion. God's patience is perfect in itself because it is His; its perfection is displayed in us as we are converted. Thanks be to God that He does not give us what we deserve in the very minute we have earned it by sinning. Instead, God patiently allows time for each of us to come to the knowledge of our sin for the hearing of the Gospel, so that all might repent and believe in Jesus Christ (2Pt 3:9, 15).

1:16 example. The radical change that Jesus Christ worked in Paul's life was living testimony as to how and what God will do for all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:18 charge. What is given in v. 3, defined in v. 5, and expounded upon through v. 17. The charge will involve the rest of this verse and the first part of v. 19.

1:18 prophecies. This refers to the work of the Holy Spirit through Paul by which the Spirit set apart or identified Timothy as the one to be appointed to previous pastorates, and now to the pastorate at Ephesus. Each of these was a divine call mediated by Holy Spirit through Paul. Now at Ephesus, Paul, by the work of the Holy Spirit, administers to Timothy the divine call (prophecy) that he is to serve there as pastor. The same kind of prophecy happened in Antioch when the Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul for work the Lord had called them to do (Ac 13:1–3). Chrysostom explained: "What is 'by prophecy'? By the Holy Spirit. For prophecy is not only the telling of things future, but also of the present. ... To elevate him, and prepare him to be sober and watchful, he reminds him by whom he was chosen and ordained, as if he had said, 'God has chosen you'" (NPNF1 13:423).

1:18 by them. Here, Paul speaks to the doubts that would arise in Timothy's heart about whether he was the right

one to carry out the pastoral charge given him. These prophecies—this work of the Holy Spirit that called Timothy to the pastoral office—would answer such doubts and set Timothy free to focus on fighting the good fight of the faith, according to the divine charge, or call, given him.

1:18 good warfare. Timothy's charge to stop false teachers, and those teaching, preaching, and practicing what is contrary to the Word of God, would involve much conflict. As pastor, Timothy would have to enter this conflict for the sake of his hearers, whether it be false teachers or those listening to them. The goal of the conflict is not defeat but conversion and salvation for all. How well Timothy, or any pastor, fares in such conflicts is not determined by the outcome but by the means he uses. There are two marks of such warfare that make the waging of it good. The first mark is that every aspect of it is fought for the sake of those it is waged against. The second mark, perhaps the most critical, is that the means of such warfare are limited to the means God has given to wage it: His Word and Sacraments. Such warfare and such means as God provides will include suffering. Where the war is waged without these, it is a personal fight waged in God's name, apart from His purpose.

1:19 holding faith and a good conscience. When waging this spiritual warfare seems to be unending, there is always a temptation to turn to other means than those that God has given for faith and salvation: His Word and Sacraments. As a pastor, Timothy would need to correct, rebuke, and stop false teachers by these God-given means. To do this would require that he have full faith in their ability to do God's will and work, when and where the Lord sees fit. To lose faith in God's means of salvation causes harm to one's own faith in God for personal salvation. When a person lets go of God's means of salvation in favor of any other means to wage spiritual warfare, that person sins against the conscience that God has made alive through His Word. Keeping faith in God's means (His Word and Sacraments), and using them to wage all spiritual warfare, provides for a good conscience. It is affirmed and strengthened through the use of God's means.

1:19 this. God's means of waging the spiritual warfare, His Word and Sacraments.

1:20 handed over to Satan. While thought of in terms of judgment, this is an exercise of spiritual discipline, with the goal of mercy. Hymenaeus and Alexander were examples of those who, while professing a faith in Christ, openly and unrepentantly taught and practiced what was contrary to faith in Jesus Christ. Their

publicly unrepentant false teachings and practices were in open conflict and rejection of what they verbally confessed about Christ. This being the case, Timothy, on behalf of the Church, is to excommunicate these men. Excommunication does not condemn anyone, but it does declare to them that because of their persistent unrepentant teachings and practices, the Church can no longer assure them of their salvation. Such men have, by their own unrepentance, handed themselves over to Satan. Timothy is to confirm this to them in the hope that they will be awakened to the severity of their sin, and repent and thus be saved (cf. 1Co 5:3–5, 9–13).

1:20 learn not to blaspheme. Everything these two men, and all the other false teachers, were doing is defined as

blasphemy. If these men were to be saved, they would have to learn the contents of the true faith, according to the Word of God alone, and put their full and undivided faith in it alone. The goal of their excommunication is not their damnation but repentance and true faith, that they might be saved and reclaimed for the kingdom of God. While this seems extreme, how much more extreme shall it be for that sinner who is left to eternal damnation in the name of compassion. This is perhaps the time when the warfare is the worst because the fight, for the pastor, is often within himself, and the conflict between ease for himself by letting the sin pass, and loving the sinner enough to suffer the long journey with them until they might come to repentance and faith (cf. 2Co 2:5–11).

CITATIONS: 1 Timothy 1 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*⁷

1 Timothy 1:8–11:

The Sixth Commandment

76. What does the Bible say about same-sex marriage?

God created us as male or female and established marriage as the lifelong union between a man and a woman. Because of their differences, a man and a woman complement each other and are able, wherever God wills it, to bear children and nurture them. Same-sex marriage rejects God's intention and is not true marriage.

Read **Leviticus 18:22** and **1 Timothy 1:8–11**.⁸

1 Timothy 1:9–10:

The Ten Commandments

18. How does God use the Ten Commandments in our lives and the lives of others in this world?

God uses His Commandments (the Law) in three ways. We call these the three uses of the Law.

First, for the good of His creation, God uses the Law to limit or prevent coarse outbursts of sin, thereby helping to keep order in the world (a *curb*).

41 1 Timothy 1:9–10 The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the

ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.⁹

1 Timothy 1:15:

The Lord's Prayer — The Fifth Petition

278. Why is forgiveness important for my own life in Christ?

B. God's forgiveness enables me to forgive others, freeing me from anger and resentment toward them.

Read **Genesis 50:15–21** about Joseph forgiving his brothers; **Matthew 18:23–35** about the unforgiving servant; and **1 Timothy 1:15** where Paul says he is the greatest sinner.¹⁰

1 Timothy 1:17:

The Lord's Prayer — The Conclusion

290. Why did the Early Church include these words at the end of the Lord's Prayer?

God our Father

⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

⁸ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 102.

⁹ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 54–55.

¹⁰ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 266–67.

C. is exalted as the one true God.

982 **1 Timothy 1:17** To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.¹¹

1 Timothy 1:17:

The First Commandment

37. *What are some of God's attributes?*

E. God is eternal (without beginning and end).

90 **1 Timothy 1:17** To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.¹²

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this Office?
 - a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?
 - › About His work?
 - › About His promises/gifts?
 - b. About me/others?
 - › What have I been given?
 - › What I am supposed to do/not do?
 - › How am I to do what is given me to do?
 - c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?
 - d. About the Pastoral Office?
 - e. About the congregation I serve?
 - f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
What and/or How . . .
 - › I have been thinking, saying, or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - › I have been thinking, saying, or doing that I am able to rejoice in doing well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

"This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns."¹³ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

¹¹ Luther, *Small Catechism*, 279–80.

¹² Luther, *Small Catechism*, 63–64.

¹³ LW 43:209.



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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:
“Prayer for All” (1 Timothy 2)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ... ?”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 43, *Devotional Writings II*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:193–211.

INTRODUCTION: 1 Timothy from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

1 Timothy Introduction

Paul, on his way to Macedonia, has left Timothy at Ephesus with instructions to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (1 Ti 1:3). Paul does not describe this “different doctrine” systematically; but from his attacks on it in 1:3–7; 4:1–3, 7; 6:3–5, 20–21 and from the tenor of his instructions for the regulation of the life of the church, it is clear that Timothy must do battle with a form of “Gnosticism,” an early stage of that heresy which was to become in its fully developed form the most serious threat to the church in succeeding generations. Gnosticism is not so much a system as a trend or current of thought which produced a great variety of systems, often by combining with some already existing religion. It was therefore present and active as a corrupting force long before the great Christian-Gnostic systems of the second century appeared; we have already seen one example of it in the heresy which threatened the church at Colossae.

Basic to all forms of Gnosticism is a dualistic conception of reality, that is, the view that what is spiritual, nonmaterial, is of itself good and what is material or physical is of itself bad. This view affects man’s whole attitude toward the world of created things. The dreary details of Gnostic speculation on the *origin* of the material universe need not concern us here. It may suffice to note:

- a. that the world is no longer viewed as God’s good creation, as the Scriptures view it (that is, a world which God created, fallen with fallen man but redeemed with man and destined to be transfigured with him, Ro 8:19–22); rather, the created world is viewed as in itself alien and hostile to God because it is matter and not spirit;
- b. that man’s desperate predicament, his alienation from God, is no longer seen as being due to his sinful rebellion against God, but to the fact that he is entangled in the world of matter;
- c. that redemption consists in being freed from the material world in which man dwells and is entangled. This liberation can come about only by knowledge (Greek, *gnosis*, hence the name of the heresy); this knowledge must be imparted to man by revelation from a higher world;
- d. the mission of the Savior-God is to impart this knowledge not to all men, but to a select few who will pass it on to those who are “worthy”;
- e. that those who have knowledge, the “gnostics,” must free themselves from the influence of matter by abstaining from certain foods and from marriage. (Sometimes the negative attitude toward things physical and material had the opposite effect and led to a supreme indifference to things physical and material, so that, for instance, the sexual life of man was considered to be morally indifferent.)

Such a trend of thought would lead inevitably to an utter distortion of all that “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Ti 1:11) proclaimed. God the Creator disappears—all the good gifts of food and drink which He gives are suspected and feared; all the salutary orders which He has established in this world (marriage, family, government) are despised and ignored. The Old Testament, which rings with glad adoration of the God who made the heavens and the earth and blesses man within the orders of this world, must either be ignored or have its obvious sense interpreted away by allegorizing “myths and endless genealogies.” The Law becomes the arena of speculation and vain discussions, not the voice of God which calls the sinner to account and condemns him. In terms of this kind of thought, there can be no real incarnation of the Son of God; for how can the divine, which is spiritual, enter into union with matter, which is of itself evil? And when sin is not recognized as man’s guilt, there can be no real redemption either. Where knowledge is made central in the religious life of man and self-redemption by way of ascetic exercise is made the way of salvation, there is no possibility of that pure Christian love that “issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1:5). A narrow and sectarian pride takes its place (1 Ti 6:4, 20; cf. 1:3–7). Where the teaching office becomes a wordy, speculative, disputatious purveying of “knowledge” to a select coterie of initiates, it is bound to become corrupted; it appeals to the pride, selfishness, and mercenary instincts of men, and the teacher becomes that ghastly, demon-ridden caricature of the true teacher which Paul has described in 1 Ti 4:1–2.

Timothy’s task will be to let the fresh and wholesome winds of “sound doctrine” into the house of God, whose air has been infected by the morbid and infectious mists of this *gnosis*. To the demonic denial of God the Creator and the rejection of His good gifts he must oppose the glorious Gospel of the blessed God “who gives life to all things” (1 Ti 6:13), the God whose every creation still has on it the mark of His primeval “Very good!” (Gn.

1:31) and is even in its fallen state “consecrated by the word of God and prayer” (1 Ti 4:5). To “godless and silly myths” he is to oppose the grateful adoration of the Creator. To the Gnostic misuse of the Law he must oppose the right and lawful use and let the sinner hear the fearful verdict of God in order that he may give ear to God’s acquittal in His Gospel (1:8–11).

To the rarefied and unreal Christ of Gnostic speculation he must oppose “the *man* Christ Jesus” (1 Ti 2:5), the Christ Jesus who really entered into history under Pontius Pilate (1 Ti 6:13) and died a real death on the cross for the sins of all men (1 Ti 2:6). He must present this Christ as the whole content of the truth which the church upholds and guards, the mystery of God “manifested *in the flesh*” (1 Ti 3:16). To Gnostic self-redemption by means of knowledge and ascetic self-manipulation he must oppose redemption as the sole act of the Christ who came into the world, not to impart higher knowledge but “to save sinners” (1 Ti 1:15), the Christ “who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Ti 2:6). To Gnostic exclusiveness he must oppose the all-embracing grace of God, and to their narrow sectarian pride he must oppose the Gospel of universal grace (1 Ti 2:4) and thus make of the church a church which can pray wholeheartedly for *all* men (1 Ti 2:1), a church which lives in the “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1).

To the imposing picture of the Gnostic teachers, these brilliant, speculative, disputatious, and mercenary men, he must oppose the picture of the true teacher. He must, first of all, himself *be* that picture; he dare not let himself be drawn down to the level of his opponents and fight demonic fire with fire; he must do battle, “holding faith and a good conscience” (1 Ti 1:19); he must, as a good minister of Jesus Christ, not allow himself to be infected by what he opposes but must continue to be “nourished on the words of faith” (not knowledge) “and of the good doctrine” which he has followed hitherto. He must train himself, athlete-like, in godliness (1 Ti 4:6–7). Thus he will be able to fight the good fight of faith as a “man of God,” standing in the succession of Moses and the prophets, singly devoted to God’s cause (1 Ti 6:11–12; cf. 6:3–10), taking hold even now of that eternal life which shall be his in fullness at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Ti 6:11–15). He must himself be all that the Gnostic teachers are not; and he is to see to it that the men who oversee the church’s life and administer the church’s charity, the bishops and deacons, are men of like character. They need not be brilliant men; they must be good men. It is enough if a bishop be “an apt

teacher” (1 Ti 3:2); he need not be a brilliant speaker or a captivating personality. The qualifications which Paul sets up for bishops and deacons are singularly sober and down to earth; but the moral standards which he sets up for them are awesomely high (1 Ti 3:1–13). Paul wants men whom the grace of God has “trained,” as he puts it in his Letter to Titus (2:11–12), seasoned, selfless, wise, and gracious men whose faith has borne fruit in their homes, in their marital fidelity, and in the training of their children (1 Ti 3:2, 4, 12).

Timothy had a great piece of work assigned to him. And he was a good man for the task. He was both Jew and Greek (Acts 16:1). He had lived with the Old Testament from childhood (2 Ti 3:15). Prophetic voices had assigned him to this “good warfare” (1 Ti 1:18). God had given him the requisite gifts for it (1 Ti 4:14), and his whole history had been one that fostered those gifts. He had been Paul’s almost constant companion for a dozen years (Acts 16:1 ff.). The apostolic “pattern of sound words” (2 Ti 1:13) had become a part of his makeup, and the apostolic example had been constantly before him (2 Ti 3:10, 11, 14). Paul had employed him as his emissary before this, though never for so extended and difficult a mission as this one. When Paul was prevented from returning to Thessalonica, he sent Timothy to the young and troubled church to establish the believers in their faith and to exhort them (1 Th 3:1–2). He had sent Timothy to Corinth during that troubled period when the Corinthians were becoming drunk on the heady wine of the new teaching, to remind them of the apostle’s “ways in Christ” (1 Co 4:17; 16:10). He had sent him to Philippi from Rome during the time of his imprisonment and had commended him to the Philippians with the finest tribute that can be paid to a servant of God in the Gospel: “I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy’s worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel” (Ph 2:20–22).

If Paul was a fond father to Timothy, he was not a blind one. He knew his beloved child’s weaknesses: Timothy was still young and apparently conscious of it as a handicap (1 Ti 4:12). He was inclined to be timid (cf. 1 Co 16:10–11; 2 Ti 1:7). Besides, his health was not of the best; his stomach troubled him, an ailment not uncommon among sensitive and conscientious young men of God (1 Ti 5:23).

Therefore Paul writes Timothy a letter which sums up once more the oral instructions already given him (1 Ti 1:3). This letter will give his work the sanction

and authority of Paul, “an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Ti 1:1). Paul is in effect telling the church of Ephesus what he had once told the Corinthians: “He is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. So let no one despise him” (1 Co 16:10–11).³

God’s Grace in 1 Timothy

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to proclaim God’s grace. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminds him of the essential elements of this message. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men” (2:5–6). “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (3:16). “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1:15) and is “the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe” (4:10).

Paul himself found the gospel of God’s grace to be the source of spiritual strength, faith and love (1:12–14). He

encourages Timothy to put his trust and hope in the same message.⁴

Luther on 1 Timothy

“This epistle St. Paul writes in order to provide a model to all bishops of what they are to teach and how they are to rule Christendom in the various stations of life, so that it may not be necessary for them to rule Christians according to their own human opinions.

“... he charges that a bishop keep true faith and love and resist the false preachers of the law who, beside Christ and the gospel, would also insist on the works of the law. In a brief summary, he comprehends the entire Christian doctrine concerning the purpose of the law and the nature of the gospel.

“... he gives orders as to how widows and young women should be looked after, and which widows are to be supported from the common funds; also how godly bishops or priests are to be held in honor, and blameworthy ones punished” (LW 35:388).⁵

READ: 1 Timothy 2

Commentary Excerpts: 1 Timothy 2 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁶

Introduction to Ch. 2 Paul outlines the critical path for Timothy to follow if he is going to purge the churches of Ephesus of the corrupting and destructive false teachings ravaging the flock, and bring godly order to things. Paul reminded the Corinthians, “God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (1Co 14:33). So Paul begins by instructing Timothy and the Church on the primary means to bringing about both order and peace through an order of corporate worship that centers everything on Jesus Christ and the giving of Him to those gathered. As the Divine Service brings the Lord to those He has gathered, and gives to all equally of His gifts and grace, there is unity in the “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:5–6).

2:1 First. Whenever you hear someone use the word “first,” you know there is a second and maybe a third to

follow. Why prayer first? Because prayer is the simplest expression of faith. Where the heart is unwilling to bow in faith, to call upon the Lord according to all that He is and does through creation, Christ, and the Church (by the Holy Spirit), faith is fixed on something else, something less than the true God. Just as God so loved the whole world that He gave His only begotten Son, so the Church, the Body of Christ, loves the whole world by first giving it all back to God in corporate worship.

2:1 supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings. Paul’s use of multiple terms in reference to prayer, drives home the force and confidence with which God is to be called upon. The four terms used to identify the content of our prayer symbolically point to bringing the full sweep of earthly life before the Lord. These are arranged in a progressive confidence in prayer that begins with seeking grace in desperate need (supplication), then moves on to larger and broader needs (prayer), and then being even more confident, moves on to intercede for the sake of others

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:216–18.

⁴ *Concordia Self-Study Bible: New International Version*, Robert G. Hoerber, ed., (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 1847.

⁵ *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, 1847.

⁶ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 31–43.

(intercessions), all for which gratitude and praise is offered (thanksgiving).

2:4 who desires all people to be saved. The few words simply express the reason that the Church is to be offering up all forms of prayer for all people. Since God is concerned with their salvation, we should be also. Paul affirms to the Church the desire of God, as expressed through the prophet Ezekiel: “As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from His way and live” (Ezk 33:11). Peter further expounds on this truth, affirming that the Lord does not wish that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2Pt 3:9). In each of these, there is no room for the notion that any person is exempt from God’s desire that everyone be saved. Each of these echoes what God loved in Jn 3:16—“the world”—for which He gave His only begotten Son. No one is left out of God’s desire in Jesus Christ. Hearing this glorious truth, and seeing the world, with so many who are unsaved, have you ever wondered why? Why are so many not saved; better yet, why do so many either reject Christ or wander away from Him? There are no easy answers to these questions. What God’s Word and the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, tells us is that He would have all people to be saved, and that He has done everything necessary for all to be saved.

The best information on “why?” comes from God’s Word as it tells us about ourselves. Being conceived in sin and born in iniquity (Ps 51:5), our hearts and minds are alienated from God (Col 1:21), and set on anything other than God and His Word. We are so alienated and set on earthly things that we cannot help but be hostile to God and His Word (Rm 8:7). Through His Word, God gives us the Holy Spirit, who makes us spiritually alive through His gift of faith so that we might be saved (2Th 2:13). So why do so many turn away and refuse this gift? Again, God’s Word reminds us that within each believer there is a war going on with the desires of the flesh (the sinful nature). The desires and work of the Spirit are waging war against our flesh (Gal 5:17). Stephen told the high priest and the Israelites who had rejected Jesus that the reason they and others are not saved is that they “always resist the Holy Spirit” (Ac 7:51). If there is a cause as to why so many go unsaved, we cannot speculate on reasons beyond the bounds of what God reveals to us. To do so would be to take the seat of God and bind people’s hearts to something God never said. Thanks be to God that no matter what, we can know God wants us to be saved, and that in Jesus Christ, everything has been done for us so that we might be saved.

2:5 one God. Literally, “one (is) God” of all mankind. He is not the God of one group, nation, or race but the only God of all mankind. It is He who has revealed Himself to all through Jesus Christ and wants the Church to pray for all mankind. It is His desire to save through faith in the one mediator He has chosen and sent: Jesus Christ (cf. Rm 3:29–30).

2:5 one mediator. Literally, “one (is) mediator” between God and all mankind, and that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man. In the incarnation, “God our Savior” (v. 3) unites the one God and one mediator in one person.

2:7 appointed a preacher and an apostle. Having exhorted prayers for all, Paul references his mission and authority given to him by Christ (Ac 9:4–17), not as a power play but to show that such prayers are an essential part of the Church fulfilling the desire of God that all people be saved through the preached Word. Since faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ (Rm 10:17), Paul was called and appointed by God to teach and preach only God’s Word. How often we would love to have our pastor say something more than the Word of God, so that this or that might be okay. Conversely, we would love to have our pastor not say all that God has to say, in the hopes that God’s Word will not deny us something we want. Yet, if the pastor does this, he does it to the destruction of our faith, because none of it would be of Christ, and it would turn our hearts to believe something not of Christ. Pastors, like Paul, are called to be God’s preachers and heralds, not their own or anyone else’s.

2:8 I desire. Literally “I urge.” The term “desire” tends to give the sense that Paul is using his apostolic authority to establish his preferences in the instruction that follows. As an apostle, Paul is authorized to instruct only according to the Word of God, as the Holy Spirit has inspired him. There can be no room for his desires or his preferences. To urge that the Church in every place do the following is based upon his apostolic responsibilities and authority to establish good order in the Church and in public worship.

2:8 every place. Literally in every location where there is a congregation gathered together for public worship.

2:8 men. Note the wording in the text. This is not just men in a general sense of people (which would be Gk *anthropos*), but males (Gk *andras*). This is emphasized by adding the article: “the” men. Based upon his apostolic responsibility, which provides for order in the Church according to the will of God, Paul here uses the article

“the,” found in the Greek text, to state that men alone are to publicly offer up prayers in the public worship services, and to teach the orderly way in which they are to act.

2:11 learn quietly with all submissiveness. The simplest way to understand this is that they were to be learners, not teachers in worship. Christianity elevated women to equality with men in regard to salvation and the learning of God’s Word. Jewish tradition did not allow women to learn the Law. This learning was to be done passively, in the sense that women were not to publicly instruct and assist in the instruction or during the public worship service. As an apostle, Paul was sent to teach and preach the will of God as given to him in Christ. It is through Christ that the world was ordered and created. In His work of salvation, Christ did not do away with this order, but sanctified it and returned man and woman back to it (v. 13). While Christ would have a woman teach privately (Ti 2:3, 4; Ac 18:26), He would not have a woman do this publicly in worship. Therefore, she is to submit to the order that He has established for the public teaching and preaching of His Word in His Church.

2:12 teach. While this may seem like another personal preference on the part of Paul, the prohibition of women teaching publicly (i.e., in the worship service) is a matter of faithfulness to the Torah, as found in the order God gave in creation (v. 13). As man was formed before woman and given the responsibility of tending creation, and woman came forth from man, man has been given the responsibility to faithfully speak and teach God’s Word to his family and the family of Christ. While this prohibition deals with the public teaching and worship of the Church, women ought to actively teach other women (Ti 2:3–5), children (2Tm 1:5), and other believers and unbelievers in private conversations (Ac 18:24–26).

2:12 exercise authority over a man. Teaching is an act of exercising authority over those who are taught. Prohibited from teaching and preaching in the public worship service, a woman is therefore prohibited from publicly exercising the only authority the Church has, which is the Word of God. The exact opposite of teaching is being taught: learning. This is the meaning and purpose of being quiet.

2:13 For. Literally “because.” You, like the people of the Ephesian region, might wonder why Paul, or the Lord, would restrict the role and responsibility of women in the Church of which they are equal members. What follows is not Paul’s personal or cultural basis for this

restriction, but rather the biblical basis found in the Torah (Gn 2–3) that is God’s revealed basis for this.

2:13 Adam was formed first. As God is a God of order, not chaos (1Co 14:33), He created everything according to His chosen sequence. While God was free to create both man and woman at the same time, He chose to create man first, and apart from woman. God chose to create woman out of man, not to make her less than man, but that man might understand his responsibility toward her as coming out of himself. The fact that she came from man, and was brought to the man, reveals that it was not God’s intention that she exercise that same responsibility as man in the dominion God gave them. Since the Church is God’s new creation in Christ Jesus, renewed in the purity of the first creation prior to the fall, Christ ordered the Church as the first creation. Salvation separates humanity from the fall into sin, not from the order of God’s creation. As Christ restored humanity to our rightful place in the order of creation before God, Christ also restored the rightful places of man and woman. In none of this, be it in the first creation, in salvation, and now as a new creation in Christ, does this mean women are less or unequal to men in God’s love, mercy, and grace.

2:14 Adam was not deceived. While this might seem like a slight of woman, Paul is merely revealing what happened when the woman listened to someone other than God’s chosen servant of His Word to her (Adam). To understand the fullness of this, we need to look more deeply into Gn 3 and examine everything involved in the fall. The issue is not level of guilt, for both sinned. Yet because the woman was deceived (Gn 3:13), she not only listened to the serpent, but she took the role of teacher not given to her by God. Reversing the responsibilities given by God, she then exercised authority over her husband according to what she was told by the serpent. What was Adam’s sin? “You have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it’” (Gn 3:17). The guilt of both is equal; Eve was the victim of deception, and Adam sinned willfully. While God cursed the earth because of Adam’s sin, God did not revoke his responsibility toward the exercising of authority over the woman in anything. Adam was to love his wife as himself and thus exercise his God-given authority for the blessing and benefit of his wife, just as Christ does for His Bride the Church (Eph 5). All men have this same responsibility!

2:14 transgressor. This is understood as one who steps beyond a given boundary. Having been deceived, Eve

became a transgressor as she stepped beyond the boundary of her place and responsibility the moment she began to exercise authority over the man by teaching what the serpent said.

2:15 she ... they. How sad that culture often robs these words of their real meaning. While childbearing is scorned by many, it is the blessed responsibility God gave to women. How glorious is woman that God chose her to co-create all of humanity and to be the means by which His Son would become incarnate. Having listed the responsibilities that women were not to have in the Church, Paul speaks now of the responsibility that woman, not man, is uniquely created and blessed to fulfill: the conceiving, carrying, birthing, and raising of children. Outside of the Church, woman conceived children in sin and birthed them in iniquity (Ps 51:5). Now, though believing women still conceive children in original sin, in faith they bring infants to Christ that He might rebirth them to eternal life in Baptism. Such believing mothers teach and raise their children in the faith, so they might grow and increase in the faith unto eternal life in Christ.

2:15 saved through childbearing. No woman is saved by giving birth to a child, neither is any woman

condemned because she cannot bear a child. Having been saved by grace alone through faith in Christ alone, each woman is God's workmanship in Christ, created to do the good works God prepared in advance for her to do (Eph 2:8–10). Long before there was a corporate professional world, God created woman to be the mother of humanity. The woman who has been saved through faith in Christ will in faith fulfill the good works of motherhood God has given to her. To be a mother in the bonds of marriage is fulfilling God's order of creation; to reject this is to reject her Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

2:15 if. Carries the idea of expectancy that a believing woman will not reject the good work that God has redeemed her to fulfill as her created responsibility.

2:15 faith ... self-control. While these qualities ought to be found in men and women, Paul highlights these for woman as the one charged with raising children from a young age. The mother who models these qualities will surely train her children well in these, and help them live the life of faith to which Christ calls them, and all believers.

CITATIONS: 1 Timothy 2 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*⁷

1 Timothy 2:1:

The Second Commandment

44. How do we fear and love God in keeping the Second Commandment?

Second, we fear and love God by *using* His name to

A. seek from Him all good things for ourselves and others;

114 **1 Timothy 2:1** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.

1 Timothy 2:1–2:

The Lord's Prayer

236. For whom should we pray?

We should pray for ourselves and for all other people, even for our enemies.

790 **1 Timothy 2:1–2** I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

The Lord's Prayer — The Fourth Petition

273. How does God provide our daily bread?

B. He blesses us with the ability to work and thus enjoy the fruitfulness of the earth.

913 **1 Timothy 2:1–2** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

1 Timothy 2:1–4:

The Third Commandment

53. *What is valuable about liturgical worship?*

Liturgical worship follows this pattern: Christ speaks His Word and gives His Supper; the church receives and answers in confession, thanksgiving, and petition. In this way, the liturgy keeps us focused on Christ (see also “What Is Worship?” in the Appendix).

Note: Basic elements of the Divine Service (for example, from *Lutheran Service Book*, starting on p. 151) include the following:

- b. *Service of the Word*
Prayer of the Church (1 Timothy 2:1–4)

1 Timothy 2:4:

The Ten Commandments

16. *What is God’s will for our lives?*

God wants us to trust Him above all else, to love Him, and to love our neighbor.

- 37 1 Timothy 2:4 [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The Third Article

196. *Does the Holy Spirit want to bring everyone to faith in Jesus?*

Yes. The Spirit wants to create faith in everyone and bring them under the gracious lordship of Jesus.

- 652 1 Timothy 2:4 [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The Lord’s Prayer — The Third Petition

261. *What is the will of God?*

God’s will is that all people come to know Him as their Father and live under the rule of His Son. This petition is closely related to the petitions that His name be hallowed and His kingdom come.

- 878 1 Timothy 2:4 [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:5:

The Second Article

158. *What does it mean for us as human creatures that the Son of God has become our Brother?*

It means that God has become man—sharing our humanity in all things but sin.

A. Jesus has a human ancestry.

- 485 1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:5–6:

The Second Article

153. *What does it mean to confess that Jesus is true man?*

Jesus is human in the very same sense that we are human, except without sin.

- 475 1 Timothy 2:5–6 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

The Second Article

160. *Why is it so important for us that the man Jesus, our Brother, is also the Son of God who created the universe?*

Because Jesus, our Brother, is the true Son of God,

D. He intercedes for us before the Father;

- 507 1 Timothy 2:5–6 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

1 Timothy 2:8–10:

The Sixth Commandment

69. *Why are we (single or married) to respect the fact that God established marriage and created us as male and female?*

Marriage is to be respected by all so that

A. individuals may flourish, in modesty and self-control;

Read 1 Timothy 2:8–10, where the Word describes our new life, emphasizing prayer with modesty, self-control, and other good works.

1 Timothy 2:11–14:

The Office of the Keys

347. *May women serve in the pastoral office?*

No. God’s Word prohibits women from serving in the pastoral office. All Christians, both men and women, are

gifted for service in Christ's Church, but each according to God's order, Word, and will.

1079 **1 Timothy 2:11–14** Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to

teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this Office?
 - a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?
 - › About His work?
 - › About His promises/gifts?
 - b. About me/others?
 - › What have I been given?
 - › What I am supposed to do/not do?
 - › How am I to do what is given me to do?
 - c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?
 - d. About the Pastoral Office?
 - e. About the congregation I serve?
 - f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - b. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in having done well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

"This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns."⁸ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

⁸ LW 43:209.



March 2019

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:
“Qualifications,
Godliness and
Departing the Faith” (1 Tim. 3:1–4:5)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ... ?”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 43, *Devotional Writings II*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:200.

INTRODUCTION: 1 Timothy from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

1 Timothy Introduction

Paul, on his way to Macedonia, has left Timothy at Ephesus with instructions to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (1 Ti 1:3). Paul does not describe this “different doctrine” systematically; but from his attacks on it in 1:3–7; 4:1–3, 7; 6:3–5, 20–21 and from the tenor of his instructions for the regulation of the life of the church, it is clear that Timothy must do battle with a form of “Gnosticism,” an early stage of that heresy which was to become in its fully developed form the most serious threat to the church in succeeding generations. Gnosticism is not so much a system as a trend or current of thought which produced a great variety of systems, often by combining with some already existing religion. It was therefore present and active as a corrupting force long before the great Christian-Gnostic systems of the second century appeared; we have already seen one example of it in the heresy which threatened the church at Colossae.

Basic to all forms of Gnosticism is a dualistic conception of reality, that is, the view that what is spiritual, nonmaterial, is of itself good and what is material or physical is of itself bad. This view affects man’s whole attitude toward the world of created things. The dreary details of Gnostic speculation on the *origin* of the material universe need not concern us here. It may suffice to note:

- a. that the world is no longer viewed as God’s good creation, as the Scriptures view it (that is, a world which God created, fallen with fallen man but redeemed with man and destined to be transfigured with him, Ro 8:19–22); rather, the created world is viewed as in itself alien and hostile to God because it is matter and not spirit;
- b. that man’s desperate predicament, his alienation from God, is no longer seen as being due to his sinful rebellion against God, but to the fact that he is entangled in the world of matter;
- c. that redemption consists in being freed from the material world in which man dwells and is entangled. This liberation can come about only by knowledge (Greek, *gnosis*, hence the name of the heresy); this knowledge must be imparted to man by revelation from a higher world;
- d. the mission of the Savior-God is to impart this knowledge not to all men, but to a select few who will pass it on to those who are “worthy”;
- e. that those who have knowledge, the “gnostics,” must free themselves from the influence of matter by abstaining from certain foods and from marriage. (Sometimes the negative attitude toward things physical and material had the opposite effect and led to a supreme indifference to things physical and material, so that, for instance, the sexual life of man was considered to be morally indifferent.)

Such a trend of thought would lead inevitably to an utter distortion of all that “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Ti 1:11) proclaimed. God the Creator disappears—all the good gifts of food and drink which He gives are suspected and feared; all the salutary orders which He has established in this world (marriage, family, government) are despised and ignored. The Old Testament, which rings with glad adoration of the God who made the heavens and the earth and blesses man within the orders of this world, must either be ignored or have its obvious sense interpreted away by allegorizing “myths and endless genealogies.” The Law becomes the arena of speculation and vain discussions, not the voice of God which calls the sinner to account and condemns him. In terms of this kind of thought, there can be no real incarnation of the Son of God; for how can the divine, which is spiritual, enter into union with matter, which is of itself evil? And when sin is not recognized as man’s guilt, there can be no real redemption either.

Where knowledge is made central in the religious life of man and self-redemption by way of ascetic exercise is made the way of salvation, there is no possibility of that pure Christian love that “issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1:5). A narrow and sectarian pride takes its place (1 Ti 6:4, 20; cf. 1:3–7). Where the teaching office becomes a wordy, speculative, disputatious purveying of “knowledge” to a select coterie of initiates, it is bound to become corrupted; it appeals to the pride, selfishness, and mercenary instincts of men, and the teacher becomes that ghastly, demon-ridden caricature of the true teacher which Paul has described in 1 Ti 4:1–2.

Timothy’s task will be to let the fresh and wholesome winds of “sound doctrine” into the house of God, whose air has been infected by the morbid and infectious mists of this *gnosis*. To the demonic denial of God the Creator and the rejection of His good gifts he must oppose the glorious Gospel of the blessed God “who gives life to all things” (1 Ti 6:13), the God whose every creation still has on it the mark of His primeval “Very good!”

(Gn. 1:31) and is even in its fallen state “consecrated by the word of God and prayer” (1 Ti 4:5). To “godless and silly myths” he is to oppose the grateful adoration of the Creator. To the Gnostic misuse of the Law he must oppose the right and lawful use and let the sinner hear the fearful verdict of God in order that he may give ear to God’s acquittal in His Gospel (1:8–11).

To the rarefied and unreal Christ of Gnostic speculation he must oppose “the *man* Christ Jesus” (1 Ti 2:5), the Christ Jesus who really entered into history under Pontius Pilate (1 Ti 6:13) and died a real death on the cross for the sins of all men (1 Ti 2:6). He must present this Christ as the whole content of the truth which the church upholds and guards, the mystery of God “manifested *in the flesh*” (1 Ti 3:16). To Gnostic self-redemption by means of knowledge and ascetic self-manipulation he must oppose redemption as the sole act of the Christ who came into the world, not to impart higher knowledge but “to save sinners” (1 Ti 1:15), the Christ “who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Ti 2:6). To Gnostic exclusiveness he must oppose the all-embracing grace of God, and to their narrow sectarian pride he must oppose the Gospel of universal grace (1 Ti 2:4) and thus make of the church a church which can pray wholeheartedly for *all* men (1 Ti 2:1), a church which lives in the “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1).

To the imposing picture of the Gnostic teachers, these brilliant, speculative, disputatious, and mercenary men, he must oppose the picture of the true teacher. He must, first of all, himself *be* that picture; he dare not let himself be drawn down to the level of his opponents and fight demonic fire with fire; he must do battle, “holding faith and a good conscience” (1 Ti 1:19); he must, as a good minister of Jesus Christ, not allow himself to be infected by what he opposes but must continue to be “nourished on the words of faith” (not knowledge) “and of the good doctrine” which he has followed hitherto. He must train himself, athlete-like, in godliness (1 Ti 4:6–7). Thus he will be able to fight the good fight of faith as a “man of God,” standing in the succession of Moses and the prophets, singly devoted to God’s cause (1 Ti 6:11–12; cf. 6:3–10), taking hold even now of that eternal life which shall be his in fullness at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Ti 6:11–15). He must himself be all that the Gnostic teachers are not; and he is to see to it that the men who oversee the church’s life and administer the church’s charity, the bishops and deacons, are men of like character. They need not be brilliant men; they must be good men. It is enough if a bishop be “an apt

teacher” (1 Ti 3:2); he need not be a brilliant speaker or a captivating personality. The qualifications which Paul sets up for bishops and deacons are singularly sober and down to earth; but the moral standards which he sets up for them are awesomely high (1 Ti 3:1–13). Paul wants men whom the grace of God has “trained,” as he puts it in his Letter to Titus (2:11–12), seasoned, selfless, wise, and gracious men whose faith has borne fruit in their homes, in their marital fidelity, and in the training of their children (1 Ti 3:2, 4, 12).

Timothy had a great piece of work assigned to him. And he was a good man for the task. He was both Jew and Greek (Acts 16:1). He had lived with the Old Testament from childhood (2 Ti 3:15). Prophetic voices had assigned him to this “good warfare” (1 Ti 1:18). God had given him the requisite gifts for it (1 Ti 4:14), and his whole history had been one that fostered those gifts. He had been Paul’s almost constant companion for a dozen years (Acts 16:1 ff.). The apostolic “pattern of sound words” (2 Ti 1:13) had become a part of his makeup, and the apostolic example had been constantly before him (2 Ti 3:10, 11, 14). Paul had employed him as his emissary before this, though never for so extended and difficult a mission as this one. When Paul was prevented from returning to Thessalonica, he sent Timothy to the young and troubled church to establish the believers in their faith and to exhort them (1 Th 3:1–2). He had sent Timothy to Corinth during that troubled period when the Corinthians were becoming drunk on the heady wine of the new teaching, to remind them of the apostle’s “ways in Christ” (1 Co 4:17; 16:10). He had sent him to Philippi from Rome during the time of his imprisonment and had commended him to the Philippians with the finest tribute that can be paid to a servant of God in the Gospel: “I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy’s worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel” (Ph 2:20–22).

If Paul was a fond father to Timothy, he was not a blind one. He knew his beloved child’s weaknesses: Timothy was still young and apparently conscious of it as a handicap (1 Ti 4:12). He was inclined to be timid (cf. 1 Co 16:10–11; 2 Ti 1:7). Besides, his health was not of the best; his stomach troubled him, an ailment not uncommon among sensitive and conscientious young men of God (1 Ti 5:23).

Therefore Paul writes Timothy a letter which sums up once more the oral instructions already given him (1 Ti 1:3). This letter will give his work the sanction

and authority of Paul, “an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Ti 1:1). Paul is in effect telling the church of Ephesus what he had once told the Corinthians: “He is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. So let no one despise him” (1 Co 16:10–11).³

God’s Grace in 1 Timothy

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to proclaim God’s grace. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminds him of the essential elements of this message. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men” (2:5–6). “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (3:16). “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1:15) and is “the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe” (4:10).

Paul himself found the gospel of God’s grace to be the source of spiritual strength, faith and love (1:12–14). He

encourages Timothy to put his trust and hope in the same message.⁴

Luther on 1 Timothy

“This epistle St. Paul writes in order to provide a model to all bishops of what they are to teach and how they are to rule Christendom in the various stations of life, so that it may not be necessary for them to rule Christians according to their own human opinions.

“... he charges that a bishop keep true faith and love and resist the false preachers of the law who, beside Christ and the gospel, would also insist on the works of the law. In a brief summary, he comprehends the entire Christian doctrine concerning the purpose of the law and the nature of the gospel.

“... he gives orders as to how widows and young women should be looked after, and which widows are to be supported from the common funds; also how godly bishops or priests are to be held in honor, and blameworthy ones punished” (LW 35:388).⁵

READ: 1 Timothy 3:1–4:5

Commentary Excerpts: 1 Timothy 3:1–4:5 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁶

Introduction to 3:1–13 Having conveyed God’s will that men are to be the ones to teach and preach publicly within the Church, Paul now continues with the organization of the Church by addressing the kind of men God would have to serve in the offices of the Church.

3:1 The saying. Paul interjects this to affirm that what he has previously said regarding Church order, and what he is about to say regarding the qualifications of an overseer, has been sought out by other congregations and taught. Cf. 5:17–22; Ac 6:1–6; 14:21–23; Ti 1:5–16; 1Pt 5:1–5.

3:1 aspires. Paul affirms aspiring to the office and service of overseer. Since such aspiration could be a mask for selfish gain or greed (6:10), Paul proceeds to check such aspirations against the qualifications that follow.

3:1 office of overseer. The Greek term is *episkopē*, (from which we get the English word “episcopal”). It is often translated as “bishop.” The term refers to the responsibility of spiritual oversight, and thus identifies the primary work of the office. The term “elder” is often used in the same way (Ti 1:5); it has its origin in Jewish tradition. The term “pastor” (shepherd) is also used as a synonym for this office, as it carries the oversight responsibilities as well. Knox published an account of the martyrdom of Walter Mill (d. 1558) that illustrated how differently the reformers thought about the office of bishop in contrast to the Roman Catholics. When charged with denying the office of bishop, Mill replied:

I affirm that they whom you call bishops do not bishop’s works, nor use the office of bishops, as Paul bids, writing to Timothy; but live after their own sensual pleasure, and take no care of the flock, nor yet regard they the word of God, but desire to be honoured, and called my lords. (234)

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:216–18.

⁴ *Concordia Self-Study Bible: New International Version*, Robert G. Hoerber, ed., (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 1847.

⁵ *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, 1847.

⁶ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 44–57.

3:1 noble task. Paul refers to the work of a pastor in this way for two reasons. First, its purpose is devoted to the eternal welfare of those for whom it is done; second, because it is a labor dedicated to giving the gifts of God in Jesus Christ to the saints that they might abide in Christ and be equipped for work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ—the Church (Eph 4:8, 12).

3:2 above reproach. In the Greek, this literally means that the man is “not able to be taken hold of” for failing to measure up to the attributes that Paul goes on to name. While there are several reasons for this, consider two of the most important. First, the pastor, by virtue of his office, is an example to the congregation and to any future pastors that the Lord might call from among the congregation. Second, and perhaps more important, the pastor deals in faith. As a servant of the Word, the pastor uses the Word of God so that the Holy Spirit might work, strengthen, enlighten, and grow faith. The congregation needs to be able to trust the pastor and trust that he believes what he preaches and teaches. This trust is strengthened as the congregant finds him living the faith.

3:2 husband of one wife. As there were no seminaries and schools for the pastoral ministry, pastors were usually older men called from among the congregations, which were made up predominately of new converts. As such, their cultural and religious backgrounds permitted unscriptural divorces and the keeping of non-citizenized women (slaves) for conjugal purposes. While all converts willingly forfeited this way of life upon conversion, one serving as pastor could not have this way of life as part of his past, lest it give the people of his past, or members of the congregation, reason to lay hold of him and accuse him of such a way of life. This would erode trust in the man holding the office. In no way does Paul mean that a pastor has to be married. This is a contrast to Jews who required a priest to both be married and have children so that he might learn mercy firsthand and thus be merciful. Wesley wrote:

This neither means that a bishop must be married; nor that he may not marry a second wife [if the first died]: which it is just as lawful for him to do as to marry a first and may in some cases be his bounde[d] duty. But whereas polygamy and divorce upon slight occasions were common both among the Jews and heathen, it teaches us that ministers of all others ought to stand clear of those sins. (541)

3:2 sober-minded. While this might seem to refer to the use of alcohol (see v. 3), it is far more sweeping. At the heart of this term is the sense of “soundness” and “balanced” thinking in all things. A pastor’s thinking has to rest first on the Word of God, and then on mercy. He cannot afford to so indulge himself, in anything, that his thinking becomes imbalanced in the carrying out of his office.

3:2 respectable. In regard to how the pastor conducts himself as pastor, husband, father, and the like, everything must be well-ordered.

3:6 recent convert. In the Greek, Paul used a term to depict newly planted trees or vines (Gk *neophytos*. cf. Ps 144:12). While candidates for the pastoral office need to be baptized by the water and the Word of God, they need their new life of faith baptized in the real and humbling soul struggles of life that are common to those they will serve. Maturity is a requisite for any candidate, yet Paul’s image begs a deeper understanding of what is needed. You see, without having been long schooled in the daily confrontation with his nothingness in temptation, sin, sickness, and suffering that drives him to Christ alone, such a man might easily lean on the reeds of his own understanding (Pr 3:5). How shall he be able to bring words of Christ’s comfort to those confronted with such realities if he himself has not found life and been comforted by such words (2Co 1:3–4)? The greatest wisdom a pastor must exercise in carrying out his office is that in all things he is nothing, and his sufficiency in all things must come from Christ alone (2Co 3:5–6). This in no way excludes young men from the ministry, but like Timothy, they ought to have been raised in the faith.

3:6 condemnation. While this sounds like pride might lead a young pastor to be condemned by the devil, this is not what is being said here. Paul warns that such conceit in a pastor is caused by the same sinful pride that led the devil to reject and rebel against God. The fruit of such sinful pride will bring the same condemnation that the devil received from God.

3:7 outsiders. Jesus identifies these as people who have not yet received the knowledge of the mystery of the kingdom of God (Mk 4:11), which is another way of saying those who have not yet been converted through the mystery of the kingdom of God, which is the Gospel.

3:7 snare of the devil. As the pastor’s only instrument is the Word of God, his use of the Word, in the application of the Law and the Gospel, will be used by hearers, both

inside and outside the Church. If his teaching, preaching, or practice varies, depending on the situation or persons, he can easily be ensnared by his own words and actions, thereby undermining his credibility, and that of his office. The devil has many allies in laying such snares, as Jesus experienced when the Pharisees and the Herodians sought to entangle Him in His words (Mt 22:15–22). When the pastor faithfully speaks God's Word according to the Great Commission (Mt 28:19–20), he provides little or no opportunity for the laying of any snare.

3:9 mystery. This does not refer to the personal faith of an individual but rather to the substance of *the faith*. The mystery of the faith refers to all the glorious acts and works of God centering on Jesus Christ, by which He has, does, and continues to save people through the preaching of His Word and the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (the Gospel). Paul refers to all this and more as a mystery because they are unknown apart from the Word of God and faith. While every person is born with some natural knowledge of God from the fragmented Law of God still written on our hearts, no one can know God's loving nature and saving work toward mankind apart from the revelation that He gives to us through His Word. A deacon must hold to contents of this revelation, so that he might serve according to the faith, and share that faith while serving.

3:9 clear conscience. The deacon will need to believe and confess his belief in the fullness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ without any additions or deletions to the content of the faith. He cannot question the truths and teaching of the Christian faith as taught according to God's revelation. There can be no buffet approach to what is to be believed. Just as Christ could not have saved anyone by keeping His preferred bits and pieces of God's promises, but only by keeping all of them, so also, one is saved and serves according to all the promises kept for the deacon and any believer.

3:15 household of God. While "household" is a collective reference to the body of believers (i.e., the Church), Paul refers to them as the "household of God," not so much because they belong to Him, but because God dwells in them. This also conveys the reality of all believers being joined in Christ. God has made them brothers and sisters of Christ and of one another. In this family household of God's making, Christ is the faithful one over the house of God for everyone in the house (Heb 3:6).

3:15 church of the living God. While this refers to the assembly of believers in church of the firstborn (Heb 12:23), Paul uses this designation to identify the physical nature of the Church. It is not constructed of physical, dead material, but is built of living stones: those believers who have been made alive through the death and resurrection of Christ, who build upon Him, the living stone (1Pt 2:4–5).

3:15 pillar and buttress of the truth. As the Church is a creation of God by means of the truth (that is, the Gospel), God has chosen it to serve as the support and foundation of the Gospel. Having sent the Church out into the world, it supports and bears the truth before the world so that others may be joined into this pillar and foundation of truth. Having been made a pillar and foundation by God through this truth, even though it be housed in the flesh of humanity, the gates of hell itself cannot prevail against it (Mt 16:18).

3:16 confess. This means more than to merely say something. To confess is to state that which agrees with the truth (i.e., the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ, which is the mystery of godliness). It is through this faithful confession that the Church fulfills the commission that Christ gave her (Mt 28:19–20). Only by this faithful, continuous confession of the truth, does the Church remain a pillar and buttress of the truth (the Gospel). As we see the Church struggling, we are often tempted to look everywhere, and to anything that offers some kind of revival, yet the Church lives and grows by the confession of the Gospel.

3:16 mystery of godliness. So how do you confess something that is a "mystery"? This godliness is not a mystery to the Church, for it is revealed, given, and lived in Jesus Christ (v. 16b) and known through faith. Paul refers to the godliness as a mystery because it cannot be known apart from faith. The mystery of this godliness deepens because it is not found or sustained through the thoughts, desires, words, or works of any person. It is totally the work of God for us in Jesus Christ. Because it cannot be grasped by the mind or heart of humanity, even after conversion, it must always be gladly and faithfully confessed and proclaimed. If you try to make sense of this love and grace that reside in God alone, you may have godly thoughts and ideas, but none of them will save you in the end.

3:16 He was manifested ... up in glory. While these six statements sound like a checklist of the events in Jesus' life as our Savior, it is much more. Greek usually places

the verbs toward the end of any sentence. Here, Paul puts the verbs where we find them in the English, at the beginning of each phrase. This makes each of these emphatic statements an absolute truth about Jesus Christ for us that cannot possibly be changed or denied.

4:1 expressly says. Paul's statement echoes Jesus as He spoke of the coming of the end of the age (Mt 24:10–11; Mk 13:22). Having received this already spoken truth by way of the Holy Spirit or one of the other apostles who had heard this from the Lord, Paul now states it as absolute fact. This shall happen and there is no turning it back.

4:1 later times. While this would seem to point to the time just prior to our Lord's return, the use of the plural contradicts this. The plurality of time (seasons) refers to the ongoing movement of the Church through the various times or seasons of expansion, persecution, struggle, etc. We know these times were upon the Church in Timothy's day, as they are upon us in our day, because of the rebuttal Paul provides for these false teachers in what follows vv. 5–6 (cf. 2Ti 3:1ff). They began with the ascension of our Lord, and they will end when He returns again.

4:1 depart from the faith. While this might seem to be addressing a departure from personal faith, it refers to a departure from the object of faith (the substance of what is believed in). It is a departure from the full biblical doctrine and teaching of the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. This can happen by rejecting all of it, denying some part of it, or adding to it in a way that mixes human ideas with God's truth. Paul addressed this issue with several congregations, where false teachers were willing to acknowledge Jesus Christ in some part; but in regard to salvation, they were teaching that He alone, or faith in Him alone, was not sufficient for salvation. These false teachers taught their hearers that

they needed to do some kind of additional work by which they could secure their salvation and be confident that they were right with God. Paul's letters to the Galatians and Colossians both address and refute these false teachings with the sole sufficiency of Christ for our salvation.

4:1 devoting. This means that they literally held and dedicated their minds and themselves to the false and evil teachings of deceitful spirits and demons, by continuing to hear them and confessing them as truth.

4:1 deceitful spirits. Those contrary to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. Such deceitful spirits speak through the false teachers (v. 2), and are identified as "deceitful" because they inspire the use of lies (false teachings) to deceive people.

4:1 teachings of demons. Literally, the "teachings that come from demons." As "a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44), all such teachings, though they be spoken by various individuals (v. 2), emanate from Satan and his legions. As these teachings come by deception, they rarely deny the totality of "the faith" (4:1a). The great danger for the Church in Timothy's day, as it is today, is that the falsity and error of these teachings, and their consequences, are often not recognized unless they openly deny the totality of "the faith" (cf. Gal and Col).

4:2 Like human flesh that has been deeply burned with a branding iron loses all sensitivity to touch, so the consciences of such liars have lost all sense of right and wrong, truth and life. Unable to know truth from error according to the author of truth (Jn 17:17), these liars are left to appeal to their own reasoning, which is bound in sin, and therefore in service to Satan. According to the Greek construct, this searing has been self-inflicted. This happens through a continuous hardening of the heart toward the Word of God, by their continued rebellion against the Word of God in thoughts, words, and actions.

CITATIONS:

1 Timothy 3:1–4:5 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*⁷

1 Timothy 3:1–2: Office of the Keys

346. *Who should be considered for the office of pastor?*

Congregations are to call men who are qualified in life and doctrine to serve as pastors.

1077 **1 Timothy 3:1–2** The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above

⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

and convey His grace, we distinguish the sacraments from ceremonies and rites established by human beings.

1 Timothy 3:16:

The Second Article (Part 1)

155. What do we call the event by which the Son of God became man?

We call this the incarnation, the great mystery that the true Son of God, who created the universe, entered His creation and became a part of it by becoming a man.

479 **1 Timothy 3:16** Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

The Second Article (Part 1)

161. What two natures are united in the one person of Jesus Christ?

The divine and the human natures are united in Jesus Christ. This personal union began when He became man (incarnation) and continues forever.

519 **1 Timothy 3:16** Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh.

Means of Grace

293. What is a sacrament?

The Lutheran Church usually speaks of a sacrament as a sacred act

A. instituted by the command of Christ;

B. in which Christ joins His Word of promise to a visible element;

C. by which He offers and bestows the forgiveness of sins He has earned for us by His suffering, death, and resurrection.

Note: The word *sacrament* comes to us from the Latin translation of the Bible, where the Greek word *mystery* is translated *sacrament*. Originally, *mystery/sacrament* described the saving truths of the Christian faith, such as the Trinity, Christ's incarnation, redemption, and the Church (for example, **1 Corinthians 4:1**; **Ephesians 5:32**; and **1 Timothy 3:16**). Later, *sacrament* came to refer to divinely instituted rites, such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to which the Lord attached the promise of His grace. Because they are established by God's command

1 Timothy 4:1:

The Blessings of Baptism

313. Is it possible for a baptized person to fall from faith and be eternally lost?

Yes. It is true that God's promises in Baptism stand even if we do not believe them. However, all who reject God's promises to them and die in unbelief have abandoned Baptism and do not receive what God has promised.

They will be lost.

1016 **1 Timothy 4:1** Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.

1 Timothy 4:4–5:

The Third Commandment

51. What is the significance of the Sabbath for the Church today?

Although God no longer requires us to observe the Sabbath day (Saturday) and other particular holy days of the Old Testament, this commandment continues to apply to our Christian life and worship.

C. God wants us to be regularly engaged with His Word and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips (Psalm 119:11–13). God's Word is the treasure that sanctifies everything.

140 **1 Timothy 4:4–5** For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

The First Article (Part 3)

143. How do I thank and praise God?

A. I thank God by expressing my gratitude for all that He has done for me.

444 **1 Timothy 4:4–5** For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

The Lord's Prayer: The Fourth Petition

272. For what, then, do we pray in this petition?

We pray that, in humility,

B. we would receive all our physical blessings with thanksgiving;

906 **1 Timothy 4:4–5** Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received

with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this Office?
 - a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?
 - › About His work?
 - › About His promises/gifts?
 - b. About me/others?
 - › What have I been given?
 - › What I am supposed to do/not do?
 - › How am I to do what is given me to do?
 - c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?
 - d. About the Pastoral Office?
 - e. About the congregation I serve?
 - f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - b. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in having done well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

“This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God’s word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns.”⁸ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

⁸ LW 43:209.



April 2019

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:

“The Good Servant and Instructions for the Church”

(1 Tim. 4:6–6:2)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ... ?”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 43, *Devotional Writings II*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:200.

INTRODUCTION: 1 Timothy from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

1 Timothy Introduction

Paul, on his way to Macedonia, has left Timothy at Ephesus with instructions to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (1 Ti 1:3). Paul does not describe this “different doctrine” systematically; but from his attacks on it in 1:3–7; 4:1–3, 7; 6:3–5, 20–21 and from the tenor of his instructions for the regulation of the life of the church, it is clear that Timothy must do battle with a form of “Gnosticism,” an early stage of that heresy which was to become in its fully developed form the most serious threat to the church in succeeding generations. Gnosticism is not so much a system as a trend or current of thought which produced a great variety of systems, often by combining with some already existing religion. It was therefore present and active as a corrupting force long before the great Christian-Gnostic systems of the second century appeared; we have already seen one example of it in the heresy which threatened the church at Colossae.

Basic to all forms of Gnosticism is a dualistic conception of reality, that is, the view that what is spiritual, nonmaterial, is of itself good and what is material or physical is of itself bad. This view affects man’s whole attitude toward the world of created things. The dreary details of Gnostic speculation on the *origin* of the material universe need not concern us here. It may suffice to note:

- a. that the world is no longer viewed as God’s good creation, as the Scriptures view it (that is, a world which God created, fallen with fallen man but redeemed with man and destined to be transfigured with him, Ro 8:19–22); rather, the created world is viewed as in itself alien and hostile to God because it is matter and not spirit;
- b. that man’s desperate predicament, his alienation from God, is no longer seen as being due to his sinful rebellion against God, but to the fact that he is entangled in the world of matter;
- c. that redemption consists in being freed from the material world in which man dwells and is entangled. This liberation can come about only by knowledge (Greek, *gnosis*, hence the name of the heresy); this knowledge must be imparted to man by revelation from a higher world;
- d. the mission of the Savior-God is to impart this knowledge not to all men, but to a select few who will pass it on to those who are “worthy”;
- e. that those who have knowledge, the “gnostics,” must free themselves from the influence of matter by abstaining from certain foods and from marriage. (Sometimes the negative attitude toward things physical and material had the opposite effect and led to a supreme indifference to things physical and material, so that, for instance, the sexual life of man was considered to be morally indifferent.)

Such a trend of thought would lead inevitably to an utter distortion of all that “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Ti 1:11) proclaimed. God the Creator disappears—all the good gifts of food and drink which He gives are suspected and feared; all the salutary orders which He has established in this world (marriage, family, government) are despised and ignored. The Old Testament, which rings with glad adoration of the God who made the heavens and the earth and blesses man within the orders of this world, must either be ignored or have its obvious sense interpreted away by allegorizing “myths and endless genealogies.” The Law becomes the arena of speculation and vain discussions, not the voice of God which calls the sinner to account and condemns him. In terms of this kind of thought, there can be no real incarnation of the Son of God; for how can the divine, which is spiritual, enter into union with matter, which is of itself evil? And when sin is not recognized as man’s guilt, there can be no real redemption either.

Where knowledge is made central in the religious life of man and self-redemption by way of ascetic exercise is made the way of salvation, there is no possibility of that pure Christian love that “issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1:5). A narrow and sectarian pride takes its place (1 Ti 6:4, 20; cf. 1:3–7). Where the teaching office becomes a wordy, speculative, disputatious purveying of “knowledge” to a select coterie of initiates, it is bound to become corrupted; it appeals to the pride, selfishness, and mercenary instincts of men, and the teacher becomes that ghastly, demon-ridden caricature of the true teacher which Paul has described in 1 Ti 4:1–2.

Timothy’s task will be to let the fresh and wholesome winds of “sound doctrine” into the house of God, whose air has been infected by the morbid and infectious mists of this *gnosis*. To the demonic denial of God the Creator and the rejection of His good gifts he must oppose the glorious Gospel of the blessed God “who gives life to all things” (1 Ti 6:13), the God whose every creation still has on it the mark of His primeval “Very good!”

(Gn. 1:31) and is even in its fallen state “consecrated by the word of God and prayer” (1 Ti 4:5). To “godless and silly myths” he is to oppose the grateful adoration of the Creator. To the Gnostic misuse of the Law he must oppose the right and lawful use and let the sinner hear the fearful verdict of God in order that he may give ear to God’s acquittal in His Gospel (1:8–11).

To the rarefied and unreal Christ of Gnostic speculation he must oppose “the *man* Christ Jesus” (1 Ti 2:5), the Christ Jesus who really entered into history under Pontius Pilate (1 Ti 6:13) and died a real death on the cross for the sins of all men (1 Ti 2:6). He must present this Christ as the whole content of the truth which the church upholds and guards, the mystery of God “manifested *in the flesh*” (1 Ti 3:16). To Gnostic self-redemption by means of knowledge and ascetic self-manipulation he must oppose redemption as the sole act of the Christ who came into the world, not to impart higher knowledge but “to save sinners” (1 Ti 1:15), the Christ “who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Ti 2:6). To Gnostic exclusiveness he must oppose the all-embracing grace of God, and to their narrow sectarian pride he must oppose the Gospel of universal grace (1 Ti 2:4) and thus make of the church a church which can pray wholeheartedly for *all* men (1 Ti 2:1), a church which lives in the “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1).

To the imposing picture of the Gnostic teachers, these brilliant, speculative, disputatious, and mercenary men, he must oppose the picture of the true teacher. He must, first of all, himself *be* that picture; he dare not let himself be drawn down to the level of his opponents and fight demonic fire with fire; he must do battle, “holding faith and a good conscience” (1 Ti 1:19); he must, as a good minister of Jesus Christ, not allow himself to be infected by what he opposes but must continue to be “nourished on the words of faith” (not knowledge) “and of the good doctrine” which he has followed hitherto. He must train himself, athlete-like, in godliness (1 Ti 4:6–7). Thus he will be able to fight the good fight of faith as a “man of God,” standing in the succession of Moses and the prophets, singly devoted to God’s cause (1 Ti 6:11–12; cf. 6:3–10), taking hold even now of that eternal life which shall be his in fullness at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Ti 6:11–15). He must himself be all that the Gnostic teachers are not; and he is to see to it that the men who oversee the church’s life and administer the church’s charity, the bishops and deacons, are men of like character. They need not be brilliant men; they must be good men. It is enough if a bishop be “an apt

teacher” (1 Ti 3:2); he need not be a brilliant speaker or a captivating personality. The qualifications which Paul sets up for bishops and deacons are singularly sober and down to earth; but the moral standards which he sets up for them are awesomely high (1 Ti 3:1–13). Paul wants men whom the grace of God has “trained,” as he puts it in his Letter to Titus (2:11–12), seasoned, selfless, wise, and gracious men whose faith has borne fruit in their homes, in their marital fidelity, and in the training of their children (1 Ti 3:2, 4, 12).

Timothy had a great piece of work assigned to him. And he was a good man for the task. He was both Jew and Greek (Acts 16:1). He had lived with the Old Testament from childhood (2 Ti 3:15). Prophetic voices had assigned him to this “good warfare” (1 Ti 1:18). God had given him the requisite gifts for it (1 Ti 4:14), and his whole history had been one that fostered those gifts. He had been Paul’s almost constant companion for a dozen years (Acts 16:1 ff.). The apostolic “pattern of sound words” (2 Ti 1:13) had become a part of his makeup, and the apostolic example had been constantly before him (2 Ti 3:10, 11, 14). Paul had employed him as his emissary before this, though never for so extended and difficult a mission as this one. When Paul was prevented from returning to Thessalonica, he sent Timothy to the young and troubled church to establish the believers in their faith and to exhort them (1 Th 3:1–2). He had sent Timothy to Corinth during that troubled period when the Corinthians were becoming drunk on the heady wine of the new teaching, to remind them of the apostle’s “ways in Christ” (1 Co 4:17; 16:10).

He had sent him to Philippi from Rome during the time of his imprisonment and had commended him to the Philippians with the finest tribute that can be paid to a servant of God in the Gospel: “I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy’s worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel” (Ph 2:20–22).

If Paul was a fond father to Timothy, he was not a blind one. He knew his beloved child’s weaknesses: Timothy was still young and apparently conscious of it as a handicap (1 Ti 4:12). He was inclined to be timid (cf. 1 Co 16:10–11; 2 Ti 1:7). Besides, his health was not of the best; his stomach troubled him, an ailment not uncommon among sensitive and conscientious young men of God (1 Ti 5:23).

Therefore Paul writes Timothy a letter which sums up once more the oral instructions already given him (1 Ti 1:3). This letter will give his work the sanction

and authority of Paul, “an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Ti 1:1). Paul is in effect telling the church of Ephesus what he had once told the Corinthians: “He is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. So let no one despise him” (1 Co 16:10–11).³

God’s Grace in 1 Timothy

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to proclaim God’s grace. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminds him of the essential elements of this message. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men” (2:5–6). “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (3:16). “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1:15) and is “the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe” (4:10).

Paul himself found the gospel of God’s grace to be the source of spiritual strength, faith and love (1:12–14). He

encourages Timothy to put his trust and hope in the same message.⁴

Luther on 1 Timothy

“This epistle St. Paul writes in order to provide a model to all bishops of what they are to teach and how they are to rule Christendom in the various stations of life, so that it may not be necessary for them to rule Christians according to their own human opinions.

“... he charges that a bishop keep true faith and love and resist the false preachers of the law who, beside Christ and the gospel, would also insist on the works of the law. In a brief summary, he comprehends the entire Christian doctrine concerning the purpose of the law and the nature of the gospel.

“... he gives orders as to how widows and young women should be looked after, and which widows are to be supported from the common funds; also how godly bishops or priests are to be held in honor, and blameworthy ones punished” (LW 35:388).⁵

READ: 1 Timothy 4:6–6:2

Commentary Excerpts: 1 Timothy 4:6–6:2 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁶

4:6 words of the faith. The biblical texts that speak to both God’s Law and the Gospel of salvation of sinners through faith in Jesus Christ alone. It is through these words of faith that faith is given (Rm 10:17). The “words of faith” do not stand in contrast to “good doctrine” but are the sum and substance of it.

4:6 good doctrine. The full and faithful application of the “words of faith” through teaching and preaching to both believer and nonbeliever for the salvation of both.

4:7 myths. See exposition of 1:4.

4:7 train yourself for godliness. As the evil spirits, like Satan, are always on the prowl, seeking whom they may devour by any means of deception or myth, both the overseer/pastor and the parishioner need to be constantly exercising themselves in the gifts of God (i.e., His Word and Sacraments). Only in this way shall

they be preserved by the Spirit through these constant assaults of the evil one. To take to oneself a means of godliness that God has not given (myths and the like) is to weaken one’s faith in the means of true godliness.

4:8 bodily training is of some value. Physical exercise and discipline are beneficial, but discipline, self-denial, and fasting do nothing to stop the desires and indulging of our sinful flesh.

4:8 value in every way. Through true and faithful devotion to being trained in the “words of faith” and the faithful teaching of doctrine (godliness), there were promised blessings for this life and the life to come in eternity. The value of this godliness is held out in the promises given in it. This godliness offered these blessings to the believer, and to the whole Church, as together they exercised themselves in it, toward one another and the world.

4:10 especially of those who believe. While Christ came and accomplished the work of salvation for all people by

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:216–18.

⁴ *Concordia Self-Study Bible: New International Version*, Robert G. Hoerber, ed., (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 1847.

⁵ *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, 1847.

⁶ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 58–79.

dying and rising for all (objective justification), the work of the Savior benefits only those who receive it through faith (subjective justification/salvation). While many people strive and toil after God, it is the believer alone who has received these promises and strives after the godliness that has blessings for now and eternity.

4:13 This is a shorthand version of what Paul describes to the Colossians as the ministry of overseers (Col 1:24–28). Here, Paul sets down three primary responsibilities of the Office of the Public Ministry. The call to be devoted to these things was not merely a personal exhortation. Timothy, serving in Paul's stead to the congregations of Ephesus, was to devote himself to making sure that, above all else, the ministry of the pastors and congregations was devoted to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching God's Word. Cranmer wrote: "Resist with the Scriptures, when any man disputes. ... [E]stablish a godly and a perfect unity and concord out of the Scripture" (2:17).

4:13 public reading. This refers to reading of the Scriptures, the Old Testament, and those books which became the New Testament, as they came available. While this follows the fact that the Church rises and rests on the Word of God, the public reading and exposition of Scripture is the best way to refute those preaching themselves, genealogies, myths, and the like (cf. 1:4). This was not a new concept. The public reading of Scripture and exposition in the worship was the central part of Jewish synagogue worship (cf. Lk 4:16–21).

4:13 exhortation. This is best understood as the teaching or sermon that would follow and be based upon the Scriptures that were read. Because it was an exhortation, it would include both the articulation and application of the Law (admonishment) and the Gospel (grace and encouragement) to their hearers. While this took place in the public worship service, this same pattern is followed in both public teaching and in the individual/personal application of the Word.

4:14 gift. In the Greek, the term is *charisma*. The gift itself is understood as prophecy, the ability to understand the true Gospel against the various and false teachers, and the ability to faithfully apply it to the lives of his hearers. This gift, or capacity to do this, was first and foremost the result of the Holy Spirit who had enlightened Timothy with His gifts. Whether Timothy was given something beyond his natural ability or used his natural ability is not the issue; either possibility

would be sanctified and put to use by the Holy Spirit (v. 13) for the sake of the Church.

4:14 given you by prophecy. Timothy's gift of understanding the Gospel and speaking it faithfully and contextually came from Paul's expounding of the Old Testament prophecies about the Christ.

4:14 council of elders. These were fellow pastors in the region of Lystra who had examined Timothy, and finding him qualified for the Office of the Public Ministry, first placed him into the pastoral office.

4:14 laid their hands on you. This is the visible sign to the congregation, by the elders or an overseer, which identified the man whom the Lord, through the Church, had chosen to serve as their pastor. This is a symbolical acknowledgement of God's will to the congregation, so as to establish the authority of the pastor in all things pertaining to the Word of God and doctrine. This apostolic practice continues today as pastors are trained, examined, ordained, and installed into their office by fellow pastors.

4:16 close watch. This refers to the process of self-examination by Timothy, and every pastor, first in light of God's two words of Law and Gospel, then in terms of his divine call in accordance with the full testimony of God's Word. Paul gave this same charge to the Ephesian elders when he called them to him while he was at Miletus (Ac 20:28). The purpose of this close watch was to resist and overcome the various temptations common to all believers and to those particular to the Office of the Public Ministry (cf. Gal 6:1).

4:16 save both yourself and your hearers. While it is God alone who saves, He is a God who saves through means (2:4). The personal faith, through which a person receives God's saving grace in Jesus Christ, comes from hearing the Word of Christ (Rm 10:17). The pastor is equal in his absolute need of God's saving Word, to those to whom he preaches and teaches that same Word. Thus, by faithfully applying God's Law and Gospel to himself according to the Word, his faith will be strengthened, and he will be better able to preach and teach that same saving Word to his hearers. Cf. 1Co 9:22; Jas 5:20; Jude 23.

Introduction to 5:1–6:2 Having given Timothy instruction and rules in regard to his personal conduct as an overseer/pastor, Paul now lays out how Timothy as a pastor, and as Paul's representative, is to handle certain cases and kinds of members in the Church. Thus, Timothy was to make sure that these rules were

observed in all the congregations of Ephesus. Regarding Paul's method of instruction, Ambrose notes, "The first exercise in training the soul is to turn away sin, the second to implant virtue" (NPNF2 10:393).

5:8 denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This does not mean that the individual has no personal faith, but such a person has denied "the faith." Through the Gospel, Christ has saved us and set us free as new creations to love as He has loved us. Such a person may yet have some personal faith, but, by his or her actions, have spurned this freedom and the expression of faith's working through love (Gal 5:6). What makes this person worse than an unbeliever is that even unbelievers, as a rule, take care of their families. Cf. Lk 6:32; Rm 2:14. To persist in not providing for one's family is a rejection of the will of God, and therefore a hardening of the heart. When this takes place, personal faith is in grave danger.

5:15 strayed after Satan. Literally "turned away after Satan." As a positive statement, this means that these have unrepentantly adopted ungodly lifestyles that follow the rebellious ways of Satan against Christ. No one can reject Christ, His ways, and His Word and not be following Satan. There is nothing in what Paul says here to indicate that such a person following Satan is ever aware of it. Such individuals, beguiled by the lies of Satan, in all likelihood believe to still be followers of Christ. Paul speaks of such a person in v. 6 as "dead even while living." While Paul is referring to some widows who had strayed after Satan, he began this letter identifying two men who were doing the same thing (1:20). Here, Paul explains the reason for the rules laid out. As much as these are for the sake of the Church, they are also for the sake of these women and their eternal salvation.

5:17 elders. This refers to the overseers/pastors (3:1–7) in the various congregations in Ephesus.

5:17 rule well. This is describing the pastoral responsibility of presiding over all matters regarding the Word of God and doctrine. The authority to do so is unique to the Office of the Public Ministry according to Christ, who instituted it. Cf. 4:13–14; 1Th 5:12; 1Co 12:28; Jn 20:23.

5:17 double honor. As before, to "honor" is to give preference. To give double honor means to give a greater measure of preference. While the reasons for this greater honor are many, there are two that are foundational. First, the fact that these men were chosen by God through the Church, to fill the office Christ created for

their sake as the Church, is essential to why they are worthy of double honor. They serve in an honorable office for the sake of the Church. Second, the fact that they are not merely teaching and preaching, but teaching and preaching the Word of God according to the needs of the saints for the sake of their salvation, makes them worthy of greater honor. The pastor has to be ever learning the Word of God and learning about the people he serves so that he is able to speak God's Word faithfully to them. This may be a call to repent, a word of forgiveness, comfort, exhortation, and the like. Such service is worthy of honor and support, as Paul goes on to state in the next verse (v. 18).

5:17 preaching and teaching. This is the faithful application of God's two words of Law and Gospel to the lives of their hearers in worship, Bible study, or individual study. Pastors apply God's Word to both believers within the Church, to strengthen them in the faith, and to unbelievers, not yet a part of the Church, so that hearing the Good News of salvation in Christ, they might be saved. See v. 4:13 "exhortation."

5:18 Having said that pastors are worthy of double honor, Paul eliminates speculation about one of the ways this greater honor is to be expressed to pastors—compensation. He does this by first quoting Dt 25:4, regarding not muzzling the ox, which he also quoted to the Corinthians (1Co 9:7–14), and then by quoting Christ concerning the laborer and the wages he deserves (Lk 10:7; Mt 10:10). While affording the pastor double honor does not mean double compensation, it does include proper compensation. The most faithful rule to follow in terms of compensation is to be found in the words of Christ, "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Mt 7:12). As members would have their employers compensate them for their labor, so they, as believers in Christ, ought to compensate the pastor and other workers that the Lord has given them.

5:19 evidence of two or three witnesses. While this requirement for taking up any charge against a pastor may seem extreme, it was designed to protect pastors from spurious charges that may have been brought maliciously. The basis for requiring the evidence of multiple witnesses was the requirement the Lord set down for the Jews in handling criminal cases (Dt 19:15). This follows the very way the Savior said that we should handle the correction of one who is caught in sin (Mt. 18:16). Paul had the Corinthians follow this same rule in dealing with one another (2Co 13:1).

5:20 persist in sin. Aware of the fact that there were pastors who had done wrong, with credible charges of wrongdoing brought by multiple witnesses, Paul addresses how to deal with those who refuse to repent of their wrongdoing. Their lack of repentance was not due to ignorance but to willful persistence in the sin.

5:20 rebuke them in the presence of all. The fact that there are multiple witnesses of the sin means that this sin is public rather than private. Since the accused person refused to listen to those calling him privately to repent, Timothy is to follow the command of Christ, which would bring the matter publicly before the whole church. The pastor's sin and his persistence in it had to be publicly rebuked in the sharpest of terms in this setting for two reasons. The first reason is that he might finally repent and receive Christ's blessed forgiveness and bring about an amending of his life. The second reason is for the sake of the Office of the Public Ministry and the pastors filling it. They must be made aware of the gravity of such sin, and the danger that persistence in it brings, and develop a proper godly fear of committing the same sin.

5:20 all. As a rule, this refers to the members of the congregation. It can on occasion, depending on the situation, also refer to other elders.

5:20 fear. Other pastors hold the same office, bear the same weakness of the flesh, and face the same temptations as the one who is being publicly rebuked. The public rebuking serves to foster a godly fear of succumbing to the same temptation in sin. Such fear is insufficient in and of itself. Such fear must include a right faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior if there is going to be any real check against such sin.

5:21 presence. A more literal understanding of this would be "in the sight of." While Paul's words might sound like a stern warning to Timothy, due to the importance of the issue, these words carry great encouragement and consolation to Timothy and every pastor. Paul has set before Timothy some difficult situations and issues that must be dealt with faithfully and impartially. Each of these brings its own baggage of hostility and temptations. What an assuring thing to

know that in doing this work, no matter how difficult, it is done in the presence of God, who created Timothy and those he served; of Christ, who had redeemed them for Himself; and of the angels sent from God in service of Timothy and all the saints.

5:21 these rules. These are the requirements Paul puts forth in dealing with charges against an elder/pastor in vv. 19–20.

5:22 hasty in the laying on of hands. Timothy was to take the greatest care in both selecting men to fill the office and making sure they had proved themselves qualified for the pastoral office (v. 3:10). In this way, it would serve to help prevent immaturity of life and faith leading a pastor into situations that would later require the aforementioned rebuke (v. 20).

5:22 pure. This is understood in light of the words just prior, "nor take part in." To keep himself pure, Timothy would have to set himself apart from the sinful activities, lest he disqualify himself as pastor. Ultimately, purity is found in walking in the light, as Christ is in the light, so that His blood might purify Timothy, pastors, and all believers (1Jn 1:7).

5:24–25 Paul here returns to dealing with men who are considered for the pastoral office. Both the sins and the good works of some people could be readily seen. Paul also addresses the things that cannot be seen because the individual hides them. The evil one hides his sins to obtain that which his sins would deny him. At the same time, the faithful one hides his good works to the glory of God. What Paul assures Timothy is that nothing that is hidden will remain hidden because none of it is hidden to the Lord.

CITATIONS:

1 Timothy 4:6–6:2 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*⁷

1 Timothy 4:8:

How to Receive This Sacrament Worthily

370. What is “fasting and bodily preparation”?

Fasting is denying oneself food or other pleasures for a particular period of time. Bodily preparation may include proper rest, personal cleanliness, and modest and reverent clothing. These outward expressions of reverence can draw our attention to our Lord and His gifts. However, in themselves they do not make us worthy and well prepared to receive the Sacrament.

1123 **1 Timothy 4:8** For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

1 Timothy 4:11–16:

The Third Commandment

50. How do we fear and love God in keeping the Third Commandment?

We fear God and love God by *not despising* or *neglecting* His Word. We despise and neglect God's Word by

B. rejecting or disregarding God's Word.

Read **1 Samuel 15:10–23**, noting that Saul rejected God's Word. In **John 8:42–47**, certain Jews rejected God's Word. In **1 Timothy 4:11–16**, Paul tells Timothy to hold fast to Scripture's teaching.

1 Timothy 5:8:

The Seventh Commandment

82. How shall we use our own earthly goods?

We are to be good stewards of God's created gifts so that

A. our family is provided with shelter, food, education, health care, and the like;

238 **1 Timothy 5:8** But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: The Fourth Petition

274. Does God give me daily bread only for my own needs?

No. God wants us to share with others in need and to include them in our prayers.

914 **1 Timothy 5:8** If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:17–18:

The First Article (Part 1)

147. What are some of our stewardship responsibilities?

D. We are to care for the church, church workers, and church property.

460 **1 Timothy 5:17–18** Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this Office?
 - a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?
 - › About His work?
 - › About His promises/gifts?
 - b. About me/others?
 - › What have I been given?
 - › What I am supposed to do/not do?
 - › How am I to do what is given me to do?
 - c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?
 - d. About the Pastoral Office?
 - e. About the congregation I serve?
 - f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - b. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in having done well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

"This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns."⁸ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

⁸ LW 43:209.



May 2019

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES:

“False Teachers,
Contentment and Fighting
the Good Fight” (1 Tim. 6:3–21)

2018–19 LCMS Circuit Bible Studies

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A STUDY FOR DISCOVERY, MEDITATION AND CASUISTRY OF THE BROTHERS.

Every pastor strives to do as Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

This series of studies has been designed to walk through the Pastoral Epistles in support of your striving toward these ends. Each study will work through these familiar texts with a search and discover mission through self-examination. To facilitate your searching and discovery in self-examination, each text will follow with a template of questions drawn and structured according to Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray.”¹ “I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”² These four strands are:

1. **Instruction** – What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this office? (e.g., “What have I learned ... ?”)
2. **Thanksgiving** - What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?
3. **Confession** - In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
4. **Prayer** - Are there things I need to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?

Following the template of questions, there is an opportunity to turn what is discovered into prayer.

While this is a time of searching the Scriptures and reaffirming the Lord’s will for the Pastoral Office and those called to this Office, it is hoped that the questions will facilitate a time of casuistry among the brothers. Listening and learning according to Luther’s four strands will also hopefully foster a sharing of struggles and the mutual support and consolation of the brothers in light of God’s Word, of which we are servants and servers.

Sequence of this Series: This series begins with 2 Timothy. While this is the last of Paul’s letters, it is foundational in that it addresses the Pastoral Office more holistically, as well as the means God provides for it and the holder of that office. Second in the series will be Titus, which addresses many aspects of exercising the Pastoral Office in the context of the congregation. Lastly, the series will then look at 1 Timothy as it addresses exercising the Pastoral Office in the midst of a hostile culture and its influences on the congregation.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 43, *Devotional Writings II*, eds. Gustav K. Wiencke and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 193–211.

² LW 43:200.

INTRODUCTION: 1 Timothy from *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*

1 Timothy Introduction

Paul, on his way to Macedonia, has left Timothy at Ephesus with instructions to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (1 Ti 1:3). Paul does not describe this “different doctrine” systematically; but from his attacks on it in 1:3–7; 4:1–3, 7; 6:3–5, 20–21 and from the tenor of his instructions for the regulation of the life of the church, it is clear that Timothy must do battle with a form of “Gnosticism,” an early stage of that heresy which was to become in its fully developed form the most serious threat to the church in succeeding generations. Gnosticism is not so much a system as a trend or current of thought which produced a great variety of systems, often by combining with some already existing religion. It was therefore present and active as a corrupting force long before the great Christian-Gnostic systems of the second century appeared; we have already seen one example of it in the heresy which threatened the church at Colossae.

Basic to all forms of Gnosticism is a dualistic conception of reality, that is, the view that what is spiritual, nonmaterial, is of itself good and what is material or physical is of itself bad. This view affects man’s whole attitude toward the world of created things. The dreary details of Gnostic speculation on the *origin* of the material universe need not concern us here. It may suffice to note:

- a. that the world is no longer viewed as God’s good creation, as the Scriptures view it (that is, a world which God created, fallen with fallen man but redeemed with man and destined to be transfigured with him, Ro 8:19–22); rather, the created world is viewed as in itself alien and hostile to God because it is matter and not spirit;
- b. that man’s desperate predicament, his alienation from God, is no longer seen as being due to his sinful rebellion against God, but to the fact that he is entangled in the world of matter;
- c. that redemption consists in being freed from the material world in which man dwells and is entangled. This liberation can come about only by knowledge (Greek, *gnosis*, hence the name of the heresy); this knowledge must be imparted to man by revelation from a higher world;
- d. the mission of the Savior-God is to impart this knowledge not to all men, but to a select few who will pass it on to those who are “worthy”;
- e. that those who have knowledge, the “gnostics,” must free themselves from the influence of matter by abstaining from certain foods and from marriage. (Sometimes the negative attitude toward things physical and material had the opposite effect and led to a supreme indifference to things physical and material, so that, for instance, the sexual life of man was considered to be morally indifferent.)

Such a trend of thought would lead inevitably to an utter distortion of all that “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Ti 1:11) proclaimed. God the Creator disappears—all the good gifts of food and drink which He gives are suspected and feared; all the salutary orders which He has established in this world (marriage, family, government) are despised and ignored. The Old Testament, which rings with glad adoration of the God who made the heavens and the earth and blesses man within the orders of this world, must either be ignored or have its obvious sense interpreted away by allegorizing “myths and endless genealogies.” The Law becomes the arena of speculation and vain discussions, not the voice of God which calls the sinner to account and condemns him. In terms of this kind of thought, there can be no real incarnation of the Son of God; for how can the divine, which is spiritual, enter into union with matter, which is of itself evil? And when sin is not recognized as man’s guilt, there can be no real redemption either.

Where knowledge is made central in the religious life of man and self-redemption by way of ascetic exercise is made the way of salvation, there is no possibility of that pure Christian love that “issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1:5). A narrow and sectarian pride takes its place (1 Ti 6:4, 20; cf. 1:3–7). Where the teaching office becomes a wordy, speculative, disputatious purveying of “knowledge” to a select coterie of initiates, it is bound to become corrupted; it appeals to the pride, selfishness, and mercenary instincts of men, and the teacher becomes that ghastly, demon-ridden caricature of the true teacher which Paul has described in 1 Ti 4:1–2.

Timothy’s task will be to let the fresh and wholesome winds of “sound doctrine” into the house of God, whose air has been infected by the morbid and infectious mists of this *gnosis*. To the demonic denial of God the Creator and the rejection of His good gifts he must oppose the glorious Gospel of the blessed God “who gives life to all things” (1 Ti 6:13), the God whose every creation still has on it the mark of His primeval “Very good!”

(Gn. 1:31) and is even in its fallen state “consecrated by the word of God and prayer” (1 Ti 4:5). To “godless and silly myths” he is to oppose the grateful adoration of the Creator. To the Gnostic misuse of the Law he must oppose the right and lawful use and let the sinner hear the fearful verdict of God in order that he may give ear to God’s acquittal in His Gospel (1:8–11).

To the rarefied and unreal Christ of Gnostic speculation he must oppose “the *man* Christ Jesus” (1 Ti 2:5), the Christ Jesus who really entered into history under Pontius Pilate (1 Ti 6:13) and died a real death on the cross for the sins of all men (1 Ti 2:6). He must present this Christ as the whole content of the truth which the church upholds and guards, the mystery of God “manifested *in the flesh*” (1 Ti 3:16). To Gnostic self-redemption by means of knowledge and ascetic self-manipulation he must oppose redemption as the sole act of the Christ who came into the world, not to impart higher knowledge but “to save sinners” (1 Ti 1:15), the Christ “who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Ti 2:6). To Gnostic exclusiveness he must oppose the all-embracing grace of God, and to their narrow sectarian pride he must oppose the Gospel of universal grace (1 Ti 2:4) and thus make of the church a church which can pray wholeheartedly for *all* men (1 Ti 2:1), a church which lives in the “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Ti 1).

To the imposing picture of the Gnostic teachers, these brilliant, speculative, disputatious, and mercenary men, he must oppose the picture of the true teacher. He must, first of all, himself *be* that picture; he dare not let himself be drawn down to the level of his opponents and fight demonic fire with fire; he must do battle, “holding faith and a good conscience” (1 Ti 1:19); he must, as a good minister of Jesus Christ, not allow himself to be infected by what he opposes but must continue to be “nourished on the words of faith” (not knowledge) “and of the good doctrine” which he has followed hitherto. He must train himself, athlete-like, in godliness (1 Ti 4:6–7). Thus he will be able to fight the good fight of faith as a “man of God,” standing in the succession of Moses and the prophets, singly devoted to God’s cause (1 Ti 6:11–12; cf. 6:3–10), taking hold even now of that eternal life which shall be his in fullness at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Ti 6:11–15). He must himself be all that the Gnostic teachers are not; and he is to see to it that the men who oversee the church’s life and administer the church’s charity, the bishops and deacons, are men of like character. They need not be brilliant men; they must be good men. It is enough if a bishop be “an apt

teacher” (1 Ti 3:2); he need not be a brilliant speaker or a captivating personality. The qualifications which Paul sets up for bishops and deacons are singularly sober and down to earth; but the moral standards which he sets up for them are awesomely high (1 Ti 3:1–13). Paul wants men whom the grace of God has “trained,” as he puts it in his Letter to Titus (2:11–12), seasoned, selfless, wise, and gracious men whose faith has borne fruit in their homes, in their marital fidelity, and in the training of their children (1 Ti 3:2, 4, 12).

Timothy had a great piece of work assigned to him. And he was a good man for the task. He was both Jew and Greek (Acts 16:1). He had lived with the Old Testament from childhood (2 Ti 3:15). Prophetic voices had assigned him to this “good warfare” (1 Ti 1:18). God had given him the requisite gifts for it (1 Ti 4:14), and his whole history had been one that fostered those gifts. He had been Paul’s almost constant companion for a dozen years (Acts 16:1 ff.). The apostolic “pattern of sound words” (2 Ti 1:13) had become a part of his makeup, and the apostolic example had been constantly before him (2 Ti 3:10, 11, 14). Paul had employed him as his emissary before this, though never for so extended and difficult a mission as this one. When Paul was prevented from returning to Thessalonica, he sent Timothy to the young and troubled church to establish the believers in their faith and to exhort them (1 Th 3:1–2). He had sent Timothy to Corinth during that troubled period when the Corinthians were becoming drunk on the heady wine of the new teaching, to remind them of the apostle’s “ways in Christ” (1 Co 4:17; 16:10).

He had sent him to Philippi from Rome during the time of his imprisonment and had commended him to the Philippians with the finest tribute that can be paid to a servant of God in the Gospel: “I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy’s worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel” (Ph 2:20–22).

If Paul was a fond father to Timothy, he was not a blind one. He knew his beloved child’s weaknesses: Timothy was still young and apparently conscious of it as a handicap (1 Ti 4:12). He was inclined to be timid (cf. 1 Co 16:10–11; 2 Ti 1:7). Besides, his health was not of the best; his stomach troubled him, an ailment not uncommon among sensitive and conscientious young men of God (1 Ti 5:23).

Therefore Paul writes Timothy a letter which sums up once more the oral instructions already given him (1 Ti 1:3). This letter will give his work the sanction

and authority of Paul, “an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Ti 1:1). Paul is in effect telling the church of Ephesus what he had once told the Corinthians: “He is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. So let no one despise him” (1 Co 16:10–11).³

God’s Grace in 1 Timothy

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to proclaim God’s grace. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminds him of the essential elements of this message. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men” (2:5–6). “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (3:16). “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1:15) and is “the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe” (4:10).

Paul himself found the gospel of God’s grace to be the source of spiritual strength, faith and love (1:12–14). He

encourages Timothy to put his trust and hope in the same message.⁴

Luther on 1 Timothy

“This epistle St. Paul writes in order to provide a model to all bishops of what they are to teach and how they are to rule Christendom in the various stations of life, so that it may not be necessary for them to rule Christians according to their own human opinions.

“... he charges that a bishop keep true faith and love and resist the false preachers of the law who, beside Christ and the gospel, would also insist on the works of the law. In a brief summary, he comprehends the entire Christian doctrine concerning the purpose of the law and the nature of the gospel.

“... he gives orders as to how widows and young women should be looked after, and which widows are to be supported from the common funds; also how godly bishops or priests are to be held in honor, and blameworthy ones punished” (LW 35:388).⁵

READ: 1 Timothy 6:3–21

Commentary Excerpts: 1 Timothy 6:3–21 from *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy / Titus / Philemon*⁶

6:3 sound words. The Greek term for “sound” is *hygiainō*, which means “whole, healthy.” (It underlies our English word, “hygiene.) Paul expressly has Timothy stay in Ephesus to deal with those who were teaching unsound, unhealthy words in regard to Christ and our free salvation through faith in Him. These false teachers may well quote and mention Christ, but the words they use deny and undermine Him and His substitutionary life, death, and resurrection for a salvation freely given to all through faith. Lacking the healthy and wholesome Word of Christ, Christ can become little more than a friend, a life coach, an example, or even a despotic master, demanding that you save yourself. Saving faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the whole Word of Christ (Rm 10:17).

6:4 controversy. This word in the Greek is understood as “questionings.” This type of person has a sick love for controversies for two primary reasons. First, they generate disagreement and quarrels. Second, only in this way does such a conceited individual have a chance in such quarreling, which was usually public, to gain possible notoriety and a following. The sad thing is that because it is all born of sin and a desire for self, it also separates and divides what Christ united. See the notes for 1:4.

6:10 pierced themselves. The Greek term Paul uses for “pierced” is used only here in the New Testament and had limited use in classical Greek. It’s a simple verb that was used when referring to preparing a piece of meat to be put on a spit for roasting. As such, it does not simply refer to creating a hole, like the piercing of an ear, but to piercing into something so as to hold it in place. Through their love of money, they had inflicted themselves, their thoughts, their living, and the like with all manner of evil. These evils caused pain and held them captive in this pain.

³ Walter R. Roehrs and Martin H. Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 2:216–18.

⁴ *Concordia Self-Study Bible: New International Version*, Robert G. Hoerber, ed., (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 1847.

⁵ *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, 1847.

⁶ Mark W. Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 80–91.

6:11 man of God. While this could be said of any believer born of God, Paul uses this title as it was used in the Old Testament to refer to men whom God chose to speak His Word to His people, (i.e., the prophets) (1Sm 2:27). This title simply refers to Timothy as the man that God has called into the Office of the Public Ministry that He created to preach and teach His Word to His people. As such, a pastor is understood as a “servant of the Word.”

6:11 flee these things. See vv. 2–10.

6:12 Fight the good fight. The image here is better understood as “contend” in the sense of competing in Greek athletic games, rather than “fight” in the sense of a battle scene. Paul is telling Timothy, and every other pastor, to continually contend for the substance of holy Christian faith against all competitors through the full and faithful teaching and preaching of God’s Word, which is the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17). In this way, the Church herself does not win the victory, but through His Word, we have the victory already won for us, and for all who would believe in Christ.

6:12 Take hold of the eternal life. The only way a victorious Greek athlete could obtain the crown of victory was to receive it. The victor never took the prize in his own hands and put it on his own head, but received it on his head by the hand of another. The same is true when it comes to the prize of eternal life. Paul is telling Timothy and every believer to be always receiving the free gift of eternal life through faith. Confessing this faith and contending for this faith are the results of having already received (believed) it. We do not contend for the faith in order to obtain it, but we contend for the faith because through it, we have already received the gift of eternal life from the One who has conquered for us, Jesus Christ.

6:12 called. The work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God that enabled Timothy, as He enables all believers, to hear and believe the glorious message of the Gospel as God’s saving Word to and for him. This calling takes place through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the proclamation of the Gospel.

6:12 good confession. As this confession is tied to his receiving the gift of eternal life, it refers to Timothy’s public confession of faith in Christ according to the Word of God. Paul calls this confession good because it is the work of God the Holy Spirit to the eternal good of all who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord (cf. Mt 10:32).

6:13–16 As Paul begins to conclude his letter, the Holy Spirit has Paul remind Timothy that his calling and charge are from God, and are to be carried out according to the work and purposes of God the Father and God the Son.

6:13 charge. See exposition of 5:21.

6:13 God, who gives life. Paul here names God and then identifies what God does. A better rendering of the Greek would be “God, who generates and sustains/preserves life.” All of life and its continuance is solely the gracious work of God for the sake of the life He creates. Follow the sequence of His creating work in Genesis 1–2; everything He does, He does for the sake of what He is about to create. Even when Adam and Eve sinned and brought their lives to an end, the God of life steps in to preserve their earthly and eternal lives (Gn 3). Paul testified to this truth before the Areopagus in Athens (Ac 17:25).

6:13 testimony before Pontius Pilate. This refers to what Jesus said as He stood before Pilate for judgment (Mt 27:11; Jn 18:33–37; 19:8–11). Unlike the Gnostics, who confessed a heavenly Christ, too spiritual to appear in human flesh, Paul proclaimed that Christ appeared bodily before a Roman governor.

6:13 good confession. See notes on 3:16. What we believe, and confess that we believe, is the substance of what Jesus confessed, or bore witness to, before Pilate. Cf. Rv 1:5; 3:14.

6:14 command. This refers not to the Gospel but to the command given the apostles, and therefore the Church, to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything Christ has commanded them (Mt 28:19–20).

6:14 appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. This command is to be observed by the Church until the “end of the age” (Mt 28:20). This is when Christ will return visibly and every eye shall see Him, coming on the clouds (Rv 1:7).

6:20 guard the deposit. The “deposit” is the same substance of “the faith” (1:2; 3:9, 13; 4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10), and the “good confession” (v. 12)—the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. The imagery of guarding this deposit likely tends to evoke, to a modern reader, the idea of a bank deposit safely locked away and guarded. But this interpretation runs contrary to how this deposit, how the Gospel, is guarded. The only way to “guard” or “protect” the Gospel is to proclaim it fully, faithfully, and

without apology. The Gospel is Jesus Christ. He has met all attackers and detractors and has come out the victor. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, the only way to guard it, believe it, confess it, teach it, preach it, and share it faithfully in all its saving fullness.

6:20 irreverent babble and contradictions. Paul began this letter telling Timothy to charge certain people to stop teaching myths, genealogies, and the like that promoted contradiction and speculation (1:3–4). Now he concludes the letter, telling Timothy not to get caught up in what they are saying by debate and the like; to do so would be to lend credence to their irreverence. The refutation of their babble comes from the fact that they contradict themselves, and this becomes evident to all. Cf. 1:6–7; 6:3–5.

6:20 knowledge. This is used to refer to the sum of what someone has come to know. The means by which people come to know is through observation and speculation, based upon what has been observed and upon the fragments of God's Law still written on their hearts. What makes this knowledge false is that it lacks the knowing and knowledge of creation and mankind according to God's revelation through His Word in Jesus Christ. As such, this false knowledge will fall on itself (i.e., create its own contradictions as experiences change). When this happens, those who trust in this

false knowledge move more and more into the realm of abstract and divorce the real from the spiritual. This is the heart of what became Gnosticism. Those who claim such "knowledge" remind me of know-it-alls. Such people will never claim that they know it all, but they do believe that all they do know is all there is to be known, and the babbling and contradictions begin.

6:21 swerved from the faith. Paul states the real consequences of trusting in these false teachers and their equally false knowledge. When a believer begins to trust in any kind of false knowledge, no matter how profound it may sound or seem, they have left the revealed knowledge God has given through His Word in Jesus Christ—which is the Gospel. Having left the Gospel, their salvation is in serious jeopardy.

6:21 Grace. In short, "the favor of God." This word refers to God's merciful attitude toward undeserving people (Rm 5:12–21; Ti 3:3–7), God's undeserved saving work in Jesus Christ for sinful humanity and His gift of the Holy Spirit who calls, enlightens, and keeps us in the true faith.

6:21 you. In the Greek, this is plural and would be heard as "you all." While this letter was addressed to Timothy, the plural blessing indicates that Paul meant Timothy to share this letter with fellow pastors and believers in the various congregations in Ephesus.

CITATIONS:

1 Timothy 6:3–21 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*⁷

1 Timothy 6:8:

The Lord's Prayer: The Fourth Petition

272. *For what, then, do we pray in this petition?*

We pray that, in humility,

C. we would find contentment with what we have received.

907 1 Timothy 6:8 If we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

Second, we fear and love God by *being satisfied* with what God has provided us and others. This includes

A. being thankful for all that God has given us;

Read Proverbs 30:8–9; 1 Timothy 6:8–10; and Philippians 4:11–13.

1 Timothy 6:17–19:

The First Article (Part 3)

147. *What are some of our stewardship responsibilities?*

B. We are to care for our possessions and finances.

See Ephesians 4:28; Hebrews 13:16; and 1 Timothy 6:17–19.

1 Timothy 6:8–10:

The Ninth Commandment/The Tenth Commandment

89. *How do we fear and love God in keeping the ninth and tenth commandments?*

⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

FOR REFLECTION & MEDITATION

What is God teaching?

1. What is God teaching me in these verses about the Pastoral Office and me as one called to this Office?
 - a. About Himself – Father/Son/Holy Spirit?
 - › About His work?
 - › About His promises/gifts?
 - b. About me/others?
 - › What have I been given?
 - › What I am supposed to do/not do?
 - › How am I to do what is given me to do?
 - c. About faith/belief/unbelief/doubt?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in about myself?
 - › What is it that I am given to trust in as I serve in the Pastoral Office?
 - d. About the Pastoral Office?
 - e. About the congregation I serve?
 - f. About engaging the communities (civil/cultures) in which I serve?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant that I may be mindful of ...

Thanksgiving

2. What has the Lord told me for which I can give thanks to the Lord of the Church as I serve in the Office of the Ministry?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I thank you for ...

Reflection and Repentance

3. In light of what I have learned, how have I fallen short in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. Is there something God would have me to do that I have failed to do?
 - b. Is there something God would not have me do that I have done anyway?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, I confess to You that ...

Petitions in Prayer

4. In all that I have learned, what needs to change/improve in fulfilling my responsibilities in the Pastoral Office?
 - a. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I need to change/improve?
 - b. What have I been thinking, saying or doing that I am able to rejoice in having done well?

Praying God's Word

Lord of the Church, grant the work of Your Holy Spirit that I may ...

"This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside thoughts and concerns."⁸ May it ever be so Lord! Amen.

⁸ LW 43:209.