

First Visit to Second Timothy

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[0 : 00] Thank you for your introduction, Harvey. Oh, he's gone. Okay, then I need somebody else. I have an outline here which I'd like distributed.

There were 50 copies there. I don't think there are more than 50 of us in this room, but I might be wrong. Could I suggest that at first, anyway, husbands and wives take one copy between them so as to make sure that we start at least by everybody getting one.

I shall appreciate that very much. Thank you.

Thank you. No. How are we doing? I am going to work from this outline.

When you see it, I hope your heart will say, this is pretty full, because in fact it is. I think that all the key thoughts of 1 Timothy are expressed there and diagrammed out in a way which enables us to see the flow.

[1 : 55] I hope so. I hope so. And about an hour from now, I shall know whether that is actually the case or not. Well, while the outlines are still...

No, wait a minute. Have they gone right the way round? Yes. Everybody has got access to one? Right. Thank you. Are there any over?

Because if so, husbands... Yes. What? No, well, no. If there's folks still needing one, I would say, please distribute as far as we can go.

Now, the key question for me is, is there anyone who hasn't got access to one of those outlines?

No. Okay. Everybody then is able to cast an eye over them, over the outline, the sheet, every time that I ask you to do that, as I shall, from time to time.

[3 : 16] Okay. Then we can get going. Let's join together in prayer. Holy Father, our purpose is to dig into your holy word and to feast on the wisdom contained there.

Send your Holy Spirit into all our hearts, we pray, that this desire of ours may be fulfilled in this next hour.

Grant it for Jesus' sake and for his glory. Amen. Well, I hope that what happens now will not be simply anti-climax.

I am offering you a Bible study of a particular sort. I'm not offering you a Bible class treatment.

I'm not offering you anything that is so disciplined and drilled as to become mechanical, at least I don't think so.

[4 : 38] None of this has become mechanical for me and I hope that none of it becomes mechanical for you. I have an image in my mind as I move into what I plan to do.

The images of a realtor showing you over a house and you as you are led along you look around you see things perhaps that the realtor doesn't mention the things which you might not have noticed if the realtor hadn't called attention to the things that he or she has mentioned.

I hope that this study will have something like that effect and that all of you will at the end of our time together have seen more than I have succeeded in putting into words.

after all this is the word of God and the Holy Spirit is the supreme interpreter of the word of God and though we can present ourselves very lamely sometimes as we ask for the Spirit's help it's a regular part of my experience and surely yours too that as one studies the word all sorts of things do become visible and impress you even though whoever was leading the study never mentioned them.

Well let's see if by the grace of God something like that can happen this morning. So let me begin with the simple fact that the letter the second letter of Paul to Timothy is a letter it was written as a letter it wasn't written as anything else and it wasn't written in the same way that letters were written by the apostle to churches because Paul's letters to churches are really sermons of a kind he's addressing the whole congregation all the time as he writes and the analogy therefore is the

preaching of a sermon where there's a congregation listening to what you say and you are addressing them rather than any individual within the congregation those letters as I say are much more like sermons than

[7 : 54] Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus which are basically one-on-one communications a senior pastor a veteran pastor and an authority instructing guiding encouraging nurturing a junior pastor who doesn't yet know as much as the apostle isn't yet as skilled to see the insight of this or that divine truth as Paul himself is so that it's teacher and learner the whole time in a one-on-one way and that gives these pastoral letters a flavor all their own

I think I'm only saying what everybody who has read the New Testament will have spotted on their own account and I'm only saying it in order to make sure that we're all of us appropriately tuned in to focus on what's going on in this letter there is I confess something of whimsy in my choosing to title the study the first visit to 2nd Timothy but then there are going to be two visits I don't know whether you noticed when the program for this semester's learners exchange was distributed it was said that

Dr. Packer's contributions were to be announced well actually I had given notice plenty of notice of what I proposed to do but there was a slip up in communication as sometimes happens in St. John's we all know that and so it never got through to you so that you could prepare your minds for what was going to happen today and then a few weeks down the road once more however you know now that this is the first visit to 2nd Timothy and if it if the study has to have a title all its own I would give it the title Gospel Bonds and when I use that word bonds I'm not thinking of anything to do with the stock market I'm thinking of links which are particularly strong particularly compelling as one person that's in this instance Timothy is told the way to go by another person that's

Paul and I have picked up actually from John Stott full disclosure I picked up from John Stott's exposition of 2nd Timothy the thought the true thought I realized as I went through the epistle again in the light of it he's picked up the thought that Paul is as much under the gospel as he wants Timothy to realize that he is under the gospel both of them are operating in other words under the gospel as persons in ministry must ever do and so the shall I say the priorities the thrust the emphasis and actually the perspective that pulls the whole letter together centers in the gospel and in my outline which you now have before you you can see that at the end of each of the four main paragraphs

[12 : 46] I have put what at the time I did the homework I saw as the main message in section after section of the letter and the main message for the four paragraphs as you can see is first one guard the gospel second suffer for the gospel third continue in the gospel fourth proclaim the gospel well as I said I followed John Stott in using those headings as a headings summary summaries rather as a focus of what's going on in each of the four sections I want to call them four paragraphs but they subdivide into paragraphs in some cases so I will call them four sections whether

Paul himself was conscious of the logic of what he was doing in thus exhorting Timothy we don't really know this is actually always the case you know with preachers and teachers if they're any good at their job they communicate more than they realize that they're communicating and those listening pick up more than the teacher realizes that he has said well Paul was a great teacher so it shouldn't surprise us to find that 2nd Timothy like other of his letters actually is held together in this instance and in other cases may I say by the gospel the thought of the gospel under which Paul ministers and under which he wants all those whom he instructs to live no surprise as I said in discovering that this in fact is the perspective of the letter as a whole the shadow of the gospel or shall

I say the emblem of the gospel stands above it all and influences it all well I hope that that's clear I'm afraid I've spent more time saying it than I should have done but anyway this is fundamental so please excuse any impatience that you may feel that I've been too long over the initial point it is I repeat fundamental and as you'll see everything is built under the shadow of the gospel and in terms of the gospel in a way which once you see it is very enlightening and takes you really deep into understanding of what Paul is trying to get across to his second in command which is what Timothy is of course all right that's the kind of letter then that we have before us here it's the second of two an interval of something like six or perhaps seven years separates them Paul says at the beginning of first Timothy chapter one verse three of that letter he left Paul at Ephesus when his own extended ministry at Ephesus had finished he left Timothy as his second in command to

pursue certain goals which he had had before him during his own ministry at Ephesus and which hadn't yet been fully achieved and some of those goals as a matter of fact recur in the second letter to

Timothy which means that Paul has every reason to think that they haven't been fully achieved yet the dates by the way if you need them are that 1st Timothy written relatively soon after Paul has left Timothy in charge of Ephesus that dates from 62 scholars are pretty much agreed on that and then 2nd Timothy which is Paul's last letter dates from 67 or 68 I won't go into the details of how those dates are fixed I will simply say there's pretty much consensus about them and it is important when you're studying 2nd Timothy to remember that there is quite a long interval between it and 1st [18:28] Timothy which preceded it though the correspondence of a number of the emphases in both makes you think that they belong closely together in time which they don't as well as in topic ok then we are in 68 probably and Paul thinks he's facing the end of his life and the whole letter is overshadowed by that sense of Paul's own situation had he written any letters to Timothy between first and our first and our second well we don't know but I think the wise judgment is to say probably not because if he had there's every reason to expect that they would have been preserved same as first and second

Timothy had been preserved after all Paul was who he was he was an apostle his words his teaching were the word of God this was this was a solid conviction on on the part of the young churches which he founded and so if he had written a letter any letter to anybody you would expect it to have been preserved conclusion then Paul wrote two letters to Timothy not more he wrote one letter to Titus not more and so okay and this is a letter written the way that letters were written in the first century AD I've got a feeling that I've talked to you about this before but I'll just say it again if it is again quickly so that you're up to the minute letters in those days were written by dictation to a secretary there was a secretary class the scholars speak of it as a class of amanuenses well that's just a classical word for secretary you hire the amanuenses you call him in then you dictate your letter to him and he inscribes it on a wax tablet then he goes away and makes a fair copy at least what he hopes is a fair copy and brings it back to you to see if you accept it as expressing what you want to say there may be final corrections that you need to make any of us by the way who have had secretaries and dictated letters to them know what this is like so

I don't need to go into details about this yes you look at the first transcript of what's been taken down at your dictation make any corrections that you need to make then the secretary goes off and makes a fair copy for transmission and then you have to make your own arrangements for the carrying of the letter to its destination and its delivery to the person to whom it's addressed or the persons and that's there was no postal service you see in those days so that was a matter of private arrangement every time Paul obviously preferred to send his letters by the hand of one of his regular assistants who would be going you see to the place where the letter was going to be delivered sometimes however one can be quite sure that arrangement couldn't be made and then well you had to make an ad hoc arrangement with somebody who was traveling in those days without any postal service persons who traveled between population centers were very ready to be hired to distribute letters and then they would provide a trustworthy service in practice we don't know how 2nd

Timothy got from Paul to Timothy to to certainly it was a matter of specific arrangement that this letter having been put together as I say with the help of the secretary would be delivered as Paul wanted all right now it's a personal letter but it's more than that the commentators make the point most of them anyway that when Paul wrote to a person that person regularly had well actually had in these three cases Timothy and Titus actually had a public identity a public role was pastor in fact of a congregation and Paul naturally put into the letter all the things that he thought his addressee might need to say to the congregation that he served and in any case you can see that without there being a national postal service which makes the delivery of letters something you can take for granted at least you used to be able to how it will be two years down the road is anybody to guess but as I say it it was quite an event this is the point

I want to make quite an event for a letter to arrive for the pastor Timothy or Titus as the case may be or and people would discover her that oh pastor had a letter from Paul what did it say tell us pastor please Paul anticipates I'm sure that this is what's going to happen and he writes his letters to his two juniors in a way which makes both of them well three of the letters fully quotable to the congregation if that's what was called for as Paul expected that it would be so the letters are though

they touch on intimate matters they're a bit more formal in style than say a personal letter from you or me to someone whom we were trying to advise on some matter central to their life might well be because Paul knows he's going to be quoted all right all these things need to be said at some stage in order to show you the wavelength on which our minds should tune in if we're to get the full thrust and weight and impact of these pastoral letters which as Harvey said right at the beginning they grow on you and you realize that whereas first time you read them you thought that or you felt perhaps that effectively there's no more here than just a set of ad hoc instructions there is in fact a great deal more here in the way of words not simply to

[27 : 22] Timothy's and Titus' heart but to the hearts of the congregations and the pastoral needs perhaps of those congregations as Paul senior pastor though at a distance feels that he can see quite clearly and needs to say something about well again forgive me for being long and labored about that point but I do want us to tune in to tune in properly and now another point about tuning in Paul thinks of Timothy not only as his second in command not only as a relative veteran not as much of a veteran as he is himself of course but a person who's had a lot of experience of working in ministry with Paul and can be addressed as one who has learned all sorts of things from that period of working with Paul in the flesh so you have

Paul taking a good deal for granted and not say that it's hidden it's implicit in the text if you look realizing now wait a minute this comes out of an extended period of working with Paul by Timothy I mean so that Paul can strike notes which he knows will be familiar to Timothy but Timothy before before he became Paul's second in command was Paul's convert he was the son of a devout Jewish family devout at least on the women's side father was a Greek but mother and grandmother they had been devout

Jews and they brought up Timothy in that way and so when Paul met Timothy at Troas on his second missionary journey how can I say it well I say it in the way that 19th and 20th century evangelists might have put it Timothy was ripe for the plucking and Paul led Timothy to Christ that's what we're being told and he calls Timothy my child does it more than once actually in both letters not only by second in command but my child whom I've disciplined right from the beginning of Timothy's Christian life and all that is assumed too in the letters if you look for it you can see where Paul is I think you can see where

Paul is reminiscing in his own mind about the way that he disciplined Timothy and drilled Timothy in this that and the other aspect of discipleship and in chapter one verse two of this letter well it's Timothy my child technon is the noun used in the Greek and technon is a word regularly used of a young child my child then Paul is saying whom I have brought up in the faith right from the beginning of your Christian life and Timothy I love you and I don't love you any the less because you have become my professional assistant the affection which made me a sort of para parent to you at the start that affection continues continues at each stage continues now so here you've got how can

I say it a combination of care to say things that can be shared with a congregation and deep personal intimacy as Paul recalls and asks Timothy to recall the many years that they've had together and the way in which Paul himself has nurtured Timothy from spiritual infancy up to second in command level okay I hope all that is clear Timothy has now a very important position in Ephesus he really is the para apostle I mean Paul the apostle has ministered to the church for two or three years now he is going but leaving

[33 : 07] Timothy as his deputy so Timothy is to be treated by the congregation with the same respect that Paul expected in his own ministry because he that is Paul was the spokesman for Christ just like that and what Paul wants everybody to understand is that as Timothy passes on what he heard learned from Paul as he says Paul says explicitly that that's what you have to do what Timothy is to do beginning of chapter two so Paul expects and calls for the same respect for the teaching Timothy gives as he called for and expected in relation to the teaching that he had given himself now all those aspects of things have to be borne in mind as you seek to interpret 2nd Timothy and apply to us and indeed to one's own self what's passing here between the apostle and his deputy okay and you find as I said right at the beginning that all of it is shaped by the gospel we should return to that in our second study and the gospel itself of course is centered upon and declarative of the Lord Jesus Christ himself now enthroned as Lord of the cosmos and himself the one whom Paul serves and whom Timothy serves okay so that's where we are and now look at the first paragraph first paragraph that is to say is analyzed in all my my sheet where the heading is

Paul's affection for Timothy the person and the sub heading is a Christian relationship demonstrated because we've only got a limited amount of time I have to go through a lot of this at high speed and I can't be as full in spelling things out as I would wish to be I hope you see to finish over-viewing the outline by the end of this talk and that means we got quite a distance to go I should think about 11 inches if you measure it by ordinary standards or what does that amount to 25 centimeters perhaps now heading Paul's affection for Timothy the person if you write a letter to someone who with whom you've had a very deep relationship and then a long period in which you haven't been communicating with each other well you will spend the first paragraph or two of your letter recapturing the intimacy and the warmth of that relationship and that's what Paul does in first sorry in second

Timothy chapter 1 I summarize the ideas I think all I can do here is simply read what I've written first two verses Paul greets Timothy his beloved child it's a very warm and weighty way of as it were embracing Timothy on paper for various reasons we haven't been in touch with each other for the last five or six years but you're still my beloved child Timothy terrific actually as an expression of affection you share the grace that I share yes it's all here in the greeting grace mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord and the letter will be written in terms of that deep and powerful affection picked up and reasserted here reasserted in this way verse 3

Paul thanks God for Timothy for whom he prays thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience it's a bold thing for him to say actually what he's what he means Timothy to understand I think and what we reading the letter over their shoulder also need to understand is that at first Paul was perfectly sincere in believing that this claim that Jesus apostles were making that he was Jesus was the Messiah and was raised from the dead was now alive and was now in fact enthroned as Lord of the universe he thought that was scandalous error where he began to go wrong one may fairly boldly say is when he judged that it was the kind of error that ought to be suppressed at all costs so he became the number one hammer of the

[39 : 50] Christians arresting them imprisoning them treating them very hard and indeed starting his career as an enforcer of the old pre-Christian orthodoxy starting that career as the guy who held their coats while they stoned Stephen to death it was then that Paul went dreadfully off the rails he shouldn't have behaved that way in any case but he did and that was what he had to repent of when Christ met him on the Damascus road well Paul now is saying to Timothy I thank God for you I pray for you you are with me sharing in God's grace and verses 4 and 5

I long to see you I know you're a real believer that's in I think for Timothy to be able to quote to members of his own congregation Timothy though he's an adult convert well Timothy has a pedigree which goes back at least two generations and gives him status within the fellowship which Paul hopes that all Christians will bear in mind then he goes on to say verses 16 sorry verses 6 and 7 he wants Timothy to be spiritually on fire I think Harvey will resonate with me when I say scholars do wonderful things both Viva Vosi and on paper in exploring the realities behind the New Testament documents and they ought to be praised for the good work they do but if you read the books that scholars write inevitably for their own peers in the academic guild book and for their faith and he says in verse 6 let me actually read it as the ESV puts it I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. What's the significance of that? Well, in the Bible, you lay hands on the person for whom you're praying.

And Paul is thinking back to an occasion when Timothy was committed to ministry as Paul's assistant. And, well, Paul himself led in prayer with his hands laid on Timothy. And he reminds Timothy of that and says to Timothy, I want you to fan into flame the gift of God that I prayed would be in you for this ministry and that I believe is in you now you're committed to this ministry. I want you to be spiritually on fire. Personally, I wish that some of my fellow scholars were a bit more forthcoming and vigorous at just that point. And then the books that they write would not run the risk of boring readers in the way that sometimes they now do. Well, this is Paul's wish and prayer for Timothy. I want you to be spiritually on fire. I want you to be showing, verse 7, the Spirit. This is actually the Holy Spirit in action.

translated, though, with a small s because it's the action, that is the attitude and, how can I say, personal style that Paul wants Timothy to show that he's talking about rather than the Holy Spirit who is generating the warmth, the passion, the zeal, the emphasis, which marks his ministry. No. God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.

[45 : 26] This is the first of a number of references which we'll be looking at in detail in the second of these studies. What's the focus of them? I can express it in the way that very recently it has come to be a center of interest for New Testament expositors who are confronted with the way in which, through the Spirit of God, Christianity shapes itself in Asia, where in Asia, instead of the great emphasis on guilt, guilt of sin as the supreme problem from which we all need salvation. The great emphasis is on the shame of sin, as in ancient cultural terms, an equally great problem from which we all need salvation. Of course, it's a both and. I'll say more about that when we're together for the second of these studies, like I said.

But here is Paul talking to Timothy, whom he sees as a potential victim all the time of the shame culture, which inhibits folk from fully expressing the vitality of the faith that is theirs.

Fear, embarrassment, indecisiveness, distrust, anxiety, arrogance and anger sometimes as a cover-up for one's feeling of insecurity and not quite being sure of yourself.

That's the, I'll call it the evil of the shame culture, keeps you back from being an uninhibited disciple. Just as unforgiven guilt keeps you, I mean, guilt whose forgiveness you have not consciously appropriated, that keeps you from enjoying the freedom that is ours in Christ.

[48 : 18] We are free in Christ, yes, the cross ensured that, but we don't know, well, we, that is the people who are victims of the, of the, of the, the guilt culture, we don't know that we're free.

So we don't experience the full joy of freedom, and we don't express that freedom powerfully in the way that we would if we were free and consciously rejoicing in our freedom inside, if I can put it that way.

Am I coming clear? I hope so. Well, anyway, when Paul refers to the spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control which God has generated in us, he says, in you, me, and in so many more healthy Christians, that, that, that, now that you have, now that I remind you that that's what God has given us, you, Timothy, make sure that you, that you grasp, appreciate the full glory of that gift and express the full emphasis of the new life that you're now living in the power of that spirit of, it's really confidence in God.

But again, more of it, more of that next time. Anyway, that's what Paul is thinking of, he says, when he asks, when he prays that Timothy will fan into flame the gift that God has given him.

Am I coming clear? Two gifts, freedom from guilt and freedom from insecurity, one can say it that way, and both those gifts generate force in ministry, in service.

[50 : 27] I don't mean necessarily the sort of force that hammers people, but the force that makes an impression on people so that they don't forget you after your conversation with them is finished.

And they remember what you've said about Christ. Well, this is what I want for you, Timothy, this is Paul, and I want to say this before I say anything else.

And so, he says it. And then, verse 8 begins by striking the shame note. Do not be ashamed specifically of the testimony about the Lord, nor me, his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, and so on.

That's the beginning of a paragraph in which Paul himself says, in effect, take me as an example. look at the way I suffer as I do.

Opening words of verse 12. But I'm not ashamed, here we are, not ashamed, for I know whom I believed and I'm convinced that he's able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

[51 : 58] he has his hands on me as I seek to keep my hands on the new life that I now find myself blessed with and which I see, I myself seek to fan into flame every day of my life.

This is the preferred translation that you find in most of the versions, most of the commentaries, though there is an alternative translation which is actually in the King James and it's in the footnote of the RSV giving this as an alternative.

I know whom I believed and I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. there's a hymn with that version of the words as the chorus.

Maybe you know it. Well, this is Paul saying to Timothy at length, by the grace of God, I am in this important sense beyond shame as a weakening force in my life.

And I want you to be beyond shame, that is embarrassment, inhibition, as a weakening force in your life and your ministry.

[53 : 38] And the chapter ends with him making reference to the fact that some people have served him well, some people have not.

but that doesn't make any difference to this point. Paul wants Timothy to know how some people have behaved, all right, he tells Timothy, but that doesn't qualify the point of not being the victim of shame and inhibition.

That point stands in just the form in which Paul has made it, and it's basic to everything that's going to follow. All right, we spent more time on that than I hoped we would need to.

Nobody is to blame, of course, for that, except myself. I apologize, as so often I'm behind, badly behind, so that I have to say to you, if you look at the headings of my divisions, 3 and 2, 3 and 4, you'll see straight away the broad fields of thought which these next three sections explore, and when we come to look at this epistle second time round, I should go into detail about some of that, as I have gone into detail about the first section.

Sorry that I haven't got further, but, well, one does what one can, and it was once said, you know, about prayer.

[55 : 26] Pray as you can, and don't try to pray as you can't. can't. And that, I've always thought, was a word of great wisdom. And what I'm saying now is that we who teach are subject to a similar rubric.

Teach as you can, and don't try to teach as you can't. Some people can be brief, and some of us, in our labour to be clear, find that we're taking more time saying things than ever we'd bargained for. Well, guilty as charged, and I can only apologise to you. And it would be silly for me to try and say anything more than just go on ten o'clock.

It'll be much more useful for us all if now we begin dialogue and come to the end of monologue.

So, that's what I'm going to do. Any comments, friends, on any of the points that I've raised, or any further points in the first chapter of 2 Timothy?

[56 : 54] Timothy, I'm going to do a question. You mentioned that this would be a letter that Timothy could read to his congregation, or at least express his congregation.

congregation. I wondered if at that time, what I guess resources is the word to use, Timothy would have as he pastored that congregation in the five, six years between leaving Paul and getting this. Good question. we can be sure, I think, that Timothy would have a copy of all the Old Testament scriptures, and would use it as a basis for teaching regularly.

He might also have a copy of other letters that Paul had written, because Paul had written some other letters by this time, other letters that Paul had written to churches, because we know that before the end of the century, those letters were circulating around all the churches.

So, it's not unlikely that passing on copies to Paul's special deputy would already be starting to happen.

[58 : 35] Now, that's only guesswork, but I think it's plausible guesswork, and the supposition that Paul wouldn't have these documents is unpalatable guesswork.

how many other copies of the Old Testament in Greek, which was the standard version that was passed around all the synagogues and all the Christian churches, as far as we know, how many more folk in the congregation might have some or all of the Old Testament in Greek?

we don't know, and it's impossible to guess, frankly. So, the way of plausibility is to say the only thing that we can guess at confidently is that Paul himself, sorry, Timothy himself has a copy of the Old Testament and he uses it for expository purposes.

In 1st Timothy, there's 1st Timothy chapter 4, there's an admonition from Paul to Timothy given, well, five or six years before he writes 2nd Timothy, which says give attention to reading, which has been enlarged slightly in the RSV, sorry, not the RSV, the ESV, so that there's no question about its meaning.

It isn't private reading that Paul is talking about and this rendering makes that plain. Devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching, exhortation and teaching obviously, which will come out of the scriptures that you're reading.

[60 : 41] So, we can be pretty certain that Timothy was doing this on a regular basis and filling in, shall I say, filling in the full frame of truth from the gospel and the teaching that he had had from Paul's own lips, as of course the Ephesians had themselves.

That's the best I can do in answering the question. Nobody, I think, knows more more. I'm thinking of another resource and following on from George's question, could you comment briefly on what the structure of the church would have been that Timothy was looking after?

Did he have help with this message? Were they organized in any discernible way? Well, first of all, we don't know and can only guess the size of the congregation.

Nobody really has any idea, so all of us just about guess that there were about a hundred of them. There might have been only fifty and there might have been two hundred.

We really don't know. However, guessing in terms of a congregation of a hundred, we know from First Timothy, well, and actually from Titus also, there were elders.

[62 : 29] Well, that's the way that the synagogue was organized. Christians simply borrowed that pattern from the synagogue. So it seems pretty obviously the source, you see.

And Paul gives detailed qualifications which elders ought to must fulfill before they're appointed. How many elders would there have been in the church? We don't know. Five, ten, fifteen, your guess is as good as mine. you can see that if it was five or ten or fifteen, the dynamics of the eldership team would have been very different in each case according to how many of them there were in the team.

Then there were deacons. All right, again, we don't know how many deacons there would have been alongside the elders. It's evident that the deacons' priority was meeting material needs in the congregation whereas the business of elders was not so, it's not stressed that they should teach the truth, though being apt to teach is one of the qualifications it's called for, but that they should keep the congregation in order in light of the truth.

That is, that they should be experts in the applying of gospel truth to professed Christian people. That's, I think, about as far as we can go, Sheila.

[64 : 30] We don't know anything more than that, and we can only guess how it worked out. There are parts of these letters that would be very uplifting and helpful and directional for people who would share in their teaching and preaching ministry, and the elders would be enlightened by it as well as Timothy and Timothy.

Well, that's true. But here... Sharing in the outcome of what Paul wanted them to do. Well, that's right. But we're, what can I say, we're travelling by guesswork when we elaborate that thought because we simply haven't got the evidence.

Yes, at the back there. Yeah, it just seems to be implying that this is a lot of group dynamic and how a group gets along better and functions better. Now, just thinking of the AA, how it was set up by a Protestant Catholic minister, they might have maybe used some examples from this to get the AA groups functioning properly, maybe a diocese functioning properly too by using examples from Timothy to be better functioning and perhaps the parish is better.

That, I think, is a very pregnant comment, John. Thank you for it. Again, we haven't got any details, you see.

All that we can do is pick up the thought and run with it how well godly faith and order would have been maintained or established, preserved, whatever verb we need there, if in fact the leaders in the congregation had made the use we envisage of the material in, well, specifically the pastoral letters.

[66 : 33] Yes, it's rational Christian guesswork. But thank you for it, John. It's very valuable. Christian understanding always has in it a fair element of plausible Christian guesswork.

One offers a guess, gives reasons for it, and then let the Christian world consider the proposal and argue for it or against it as they think fit.

that's the way it goes. Now, we still have a few minutes.

Yes? In your title, you have sick and timidly nurturing a troubled young pastor, and you mentioned in the first chapter that Paul was trying to encourage him to be spiritually on fire, so he was having troubles, you know, having the zeal that he needed to have, according to Paul, plus he might be a little bit timid with the gospel.

Can you elaborate on any other troubles that he might have, Timothy might have had that Paul would be addressing? Well, it does seem, from what is said in first Timothy, that Timothy was, to a degree, timid, as you know, human beings vary at this point, some are very upfront, pushy, and some are just the opposite, and they tend to hang back and allow themselves to be inhibited in a way that actually restricts their usefulness, and I've already told you that I'm going to go to town a bit, on this, talking about the shame culture, or the shame aspect of culture, when we meet again over 2nd Timothy.

[68 : 53] But, yes, in general terms, one has to say, Paul does seem to know Timothy through and through, he knows what to encourage Timothy, and he knows what to say to fire Timothy up so that

he's not restricted by his own natural inhibitions, and that's something which it takes great wisdom to do, but actually it's something which in leadership is absolutely vital that you manage to do.

Otherwise, the potential of the people, some of the people that you're leading as your subordinates will never be fully realized, because you won't know how to deploy it.

and anybody who has had a leadership position, say, in education or administration in a firm that is not too large for personal factors just to fall out of the equation altogether, will know what I'm talking about, because you see this in action.

Some leaders know how to get the best out of those whom they lead, and some don't. And it's always bad news when they don't, but it's a fact of life.

Such people do sometimes get put into leadership positions, and they slow everything down. I'm sticking my neck out, of course, because I'm only a pure academic where all is said and done.

[70 : 49] What do I know about any of this? I have read the pastoral epistles, I suppose. I can say that. Yeah?

Would Timothy know that Paul is awaiting execution? well, Paul tells him explicitly towards the end of the letter.

Whether he would know when he started reading the letter first time round, I don't know. But Paul puts it down in chapter 4 as if it's likely to be news to Timothy, that is, something that Timothy didn't know until he read these words.

For I'm about to be poured out like a drink offering, the time of my departure was come, I fought the good fight, I finished the race, I've kept the faith, henceforth there's laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day, and so on.

And then the next verse, which is verse 9 of chapter 4, do your best to come to me soon. You get the overtones?

[72 : 06] I may not be here very long. I don't know how long it will be before the axe falls, but I do think I'm on my way to execution.

That's what Paul says in chapter 4, so again, my guess is that Timothy hadn't realised that things were quite so, how can I say it, so drastic, reached such a drastic point in Paul's circumstances, but he is writing from prison, and he goes on in chapter 4 to talk about how he got on at his first appearance in court, where he says that the Lord stood by him, and he was able to witness faithfully to the truth of the gospel, and he goes on to say, the Lord will continue to stand by me until I reach his heavenly kingdom.

Once again, this is Paul looking forward to his death, his execution, as something that will happen fairly soon. But this is just Paul's expectation, whether it happened quite as quickly as he thought it was going to, nobody really knows.

It must allow me to keep underlining that there are so many things, so many factual details in the New Testament milieu, where we can only guess, we don't really know.

people. And so ultimately, I don't know how much or how little Timothy knew about Paul's circumstances.

[73 : 57] I guess, though, that Paul is now telling Timothy that things are more grim than perhaps you realised. One can't say more than I think on that.

I'm just to ask you a question as you brought this out, what do you think about Paul's arrest?

Because some people say, you know, he was taken at the end of Acts 28, and he was executed afterwards, and others say no, he was let go, he went as far west as Spain or Britain, preaching the gospel, he was re-arrested, and this time, instead of being in a house, he was put into the rat prison, and then he was brought out and tried and executed, so what's your take on all that?

Well, I'm still in the land of guesswork, so are you, but no, I think that that second scenario is the more likely one, I mean, that he was released and that he did get to Spain, as he'd hoped to do, tells the Romans that in the letter to them, and now this is a re-arrest, and a re-arrest with more, more shall I say, of threatening in it, with regard to the outcome, than had been the case with his first arrest, which was after all only, I use the word only advisedly, only Paul taking an evasive manoeuvre to prevent himself being killed in an ambush, as a posse of soldiers took him to, wait a minute, where was it, from

Caesarea to somewhere, you remember, his cousin, was it, or his nephew, got to know of the plot, told Paul, and so Paul said, I appeal to Caesar in order to ensure that he wouldn't be sent with this posse of soldiers into the ambush.

But then when Paul got to Rome, nobody had anything, it seems, against him, and that's the point at which Luke finishes his story.

[76 : 25] Having said that, you said it first, of course, let me say, Luke is unquestionably a skillful writer, a literary artist, and he's writing to a word length, as all the evangelists do, and his word length brings him out, shall I say, on a note of triumph.

He stops the story with the declaration, Paul is in Rome, so the gospel is in Rome, Paul is preaching the gospel in Rome, and Paul is free to do it.

So the final note in my stories, is Luke, is of the gospel triumphing in this situation. Yes, the evangelist is in prison, but he's in prison, well, he's under house arrest, that means in prison in a broad sense, but the gospel is free, and Luke, I think, wants the reader of Acts to end up with that sense of the situation coming across to him very powerfully.

well, that being so, there's nothing in the way of overtones there to suggest that Paul was, on his first arrival at Rome, was straight away put under arrest with an expectation of a trial that would prove, that would prove to be a final condemnation and bring about his death.

There was nothing against him at that point. At the end of 2 Timothy 4, they've got something against him, and he's already been in court once, and he'll have to be in court again.

[78 : 38] That's the best I can do, I'm afraid. that's a lot of guesswork, filling in a little bit of information, which is ours. Okay? I think you want to close the meeting, don't you?

I think it's 10.20 now, so that's the past where we usually, I like the classical scholar who said, we don't know how Paul died, and he was thinking about that, and it was roughly when Nero was Roman, Caesar.

Yeah, well, that's right. And then the scholar says, the day would come when men would name their sons Paul and their dogs Nero. That's good.

That's the best, that's a great outcome of the end of Paul's life. We're going to meet him in heaven, Paul. Thank you.