

1 Timothy 1:1-11

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[0 : 0 0] Now, as some of you will know, last Wednesday evening, we looked at the background to Timothy's life and situation and the circumstances whereby he had been raised in a believing household, how he had known the Scriptures from a child.

We looked at that in 2 Timothy, and we looked a little bit about his beginning to go with Paul and how he had to submit to circumcision as an adult and the circumstances of that and the faith that that would have taken, as well as the courage.

And we mentioned that we might well begin a short series on Timothy, so we'll look, hopefully, working our way through 1 Timothy, and then perhaps take a little break for a few weeks and then maybe look at 2 Timothy after that.

So, of course, the letters to Timothy are not written just in the first couple of years of his being the companion of Paul. He follows with Paul and Silas, and he is not only the servant or minister to them, as Mark was initially, the Paul and Barnabas, but also he would be drinking in the apostolic truths, the teachings that Paul and Silas and the other apostles would be giving.

In accompanying Paul everywhere, he would also be gaining experience and a certain amount of authority, because what he had was coming straight from the apostle, who, as he frequently reminded his audiences, had it straight directly from the Lord, as we have here at verse 11 anyway, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

[1 : 3 5] So, the letters, both letters to Timothy, we mentioned last Wednesday, how 2 Timothy is almost certainly the last letter that Paul wrote that we have in the canon of Scripture.

If there were others, they are lost to us, but what we have preserved within the authoritative record, 2 Timothy is certainly the last. 1 Timothy, we don't know exactly how many years previous that is, but clearly by the fact that he says that he is leaving him in Ephesus, and that he clearly begins to lead the church there, I mean, the footnote, as it were, to, I think it's 2 Timothy, it might be 1 Timothy where it mentions that he was, well, 2 Timothy where it says that he was ordained, the first bishop of the church, I think the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians was written from Rome when Paul was brought before you the second time.

Now, of course, those footnotes are not part of the authoritative record, they're not necessarily inspired, but they give an indication of Timothy's position, whether he was ordained as bishop, as such of that church, or whether he was just the one who Paul left in charge, and of course there would have been many bishops and deacons in Ephesus, as there would have been in Philippi and elsewhere.

Bishop, of course, as we understand it from Scripture, is just that which would answer to minister now, in our understanding, it's an equal with an elder, the presbyter, which is, from which we get the term elder, presbyter meaning the one in seniority, of eldership, of leadership, and the minister or bishop was simply that particular elder whose business was laboring in the word, and the setting apart, and ordaining, and so on, others, they were equal with all the elders, there's no indication that bishops were higher than elders, or that any kind of sort of archie-episcopal oversight, as we have now in, say, the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and other churches, and so on.

Bishops, we have it in the New Testament, is simply minister, elder, the terms are interchangeable, they're all at the same level. But Timothy would have a certain authority in having been delegated directly from Paul, as I would sought thee to abide still at Ephesus.

[3 : 54] When I went into Macedonia, that I might as charge some of the teaching of the doctrine, so do. And although this is some years later, from when he was probably just a late teenager, when he began to follow Paul, he is still clearly young, in terms of years, because we read in chapter 4, verse 12, let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

And he is also taught how to respect, in chapter 5, the elders, and treat him as a father, the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.

Clearly this indicates then that Timothy is still a young man. And so his authority does not come from his years, but rather it comes from that which has been, as it were, deposited or repositied with him from the apostle, the body of teaching, the authority which is delegated to him.

That he then, obviously as the apostle's man on the ground in Ephesus, whatever he finds amiss, he can report back to Paul, who, if he comes again, may likewise have to give, shall we say, more authoritative guidance or discipline, perhaps, to the church, if and when he comes again.

But ultimately, of course, this letter, although it's some years after Timothy's first following of Paul, whilst it finds him still a young man, it's not ultimately about Timothy, of course, nor is it even ultimately about the church in Ephesus, though these are all sort of subtexts that come through it.

[5 : 35] Nor is it about Paul. Like all of true scripture, it is ultimately about Christ. And Paul begins in the same way, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God, our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.

And to Timothy, my own son in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord. So Christ is at the very outset, he is the very, so opening shot in this letter, as in virtually all Paul's letters.

But also there's the emphasis that what he has, and the authority by which he speaks, does not come from himself, but it comes from God, by the commandment of God, our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.

And Paul may further reference to that later on in the chapel. We only go to look at verses 1 to 11 this evening here, because this authority which Paul has, and which of course he has given, a measure of, to Timothy, this is a key feature in the letter.

And we see why in this first half of the chapter, because there's various other dodgy doctrines going about in Ephesus, and no doubt throughout, the apostolic church.

[6 : 48] We should never think that heretical teaching, or falling away, or liberalism, or sort of corrupting of the truth, is a merely modern phenomenon. There was never a time when the church was devoid of any corruption, or any kind of, any kind of heretical teachings, or any kind of impurity.

The very church of the apostles itself, which is the stage at which Paul is writing, in the first century, first generation, church of the apostles, is riddled with impurities, as we see here.

And it is against these that there is the ongoing problem of guarding against this false teaching, keeping the doctrine pure. So the authority to do that is one thing.

The required purity is another. And the interplay between law and gospel is another feature. So these things are all of primary importance here in this first half of 1 Timothy chapter 1.

So his commandment is from God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope, something to which we are looking forward. To Timothy, my own son in the faith. Paul is obviously not his physical father, but he regards himself as his father in the faith because it's through Paul's ministry and teaching that Timothy has come to faith in the Lord.

[8 : 09] Because of Paul's ministry, when he and Barnabas came to Lystra, first of all, obviously that wasn't the first impact. As we saw last week in 2 Timothy, dwelt first in my grandmother, of Lois and the mother of Eunice and so on, that the faith that was there had been grounded in the scriptures which she had been taught as to her child.

The Old Testament scriptures which prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. That's what the Old Testament scriptures are all about. They're preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah.

So he goes on to say, As I disought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

We see again if we were to look forward to verse 18. This I command unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before me, that thou mightest war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience.

So it's this requirement to hold fast to the truth because as he wrote to the Philippians, you know, that's where there's nobody I can trust like I trust Timothy. He is my right-hand man.

[9 : 18] He's the one I absolutely depend on here and he's left him whom he probably could ill spare that he has left his most trusted lieutenant to put things right, to hold the fort in Ephesus as I disought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia.

That's what the Philippi and Berea and so on are. That thou mightest charge some to teach no other doctrine and neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies so do.

Now we see what some of the false teachings are here. First of all, fables, myths, legends, things that people have just sort of made up. Remember, of course, that they didn't have in front of them the New Testament scriptures as we do.

They have the Old Testament scriptures but then people could build all sorts of stories on this. Oh yes, well the Apostle Peter did this and James did that and Jesus said this. How do they know these things?

Unless it's coming from the mouth from the teaching of the Apostles you can't necessarily trust it. People could make a whole matter of ideas and stories and false teachings giving heed to fables and endless genealogies.

[10 : 26] Now of course, genealogies are a big thing in the Old Testament. You know, particularly a priest had to demonstrate that he was descended directly from Aaron. And under the New Testament, of course, if somebody happened to be of the tribe of Levi and descended from Aaron, well, you know, good for you, but so what?

At the end of the day, if you're a direct descendant of King David, according to the flesh, now that Jesus has come and fulfilled it all, that's great, but so what? If I can chase my ancestry back to the Vikings or the Celts or whatever it might be, then you know, that's very impressive, but at the end of the day, so what?

How does that affect your standing with God? Of course, it doesn't. But this is one of the things that particularly would have been a thing for those from a Jewish background or perhaps, as we see the same problem arising in Crete as well, where Paul writes to Titus in chapter 1, verse 14, not giving heed to Jewish tables and commandments of men that turn to the truth.

And again, chapter 3, verse 9, avoid foolish questions and genealogies and contention and strives about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain.

They don't add anything to the teaching of the gospel. They don't improve people's understanding of their relationship to God. They are a distraction. They are not what the core of the gospel is about.

[11 : 54] They are a distraction. Not dissimilar, of course, to how Paul perhaps has caused to rebuke the Corinthians when they were so obsessed with, oh, someone's going to get the prophecy and somebody else speaks in tongues and isn't it impressive?

Wow, isn't it amazing? He writes them in 1 Corinthians 14, verses 18 and 19, I thank my God that I speak with tongues more than y'all. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding than by my voice and I teach others also than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue.

It's all very well to look dazzling and impressive but what does it actually help people with? It's a distraction. It's not the truth.

I mean, some years ago amongst, you know, bodies of Christians that I suppose you might call evangelical, particularly in England and some to an extent in America, there was a great craze that God had supposedly blessed these gatherings and fellowships with an outpouring of his spirit or a visiting of miracles and the proof of that was, believe it or not, that people began to think they had gold teeth in their mouths a hundred and a hundred several years ago and, you know, people say, oh, Luke's on, so it's got one now, oh, praise the Lord, he's blessed you, it's a miracle, isn't it amazing?

Gold teeth there and almost as if the more gold teeth you had, the more sign of blessing it was, like these were miraculously appearing. Now, dentally, I think it was subsequently proved that almost none of these people actually had any gold teeth, let alone ones that had been miraculously bestowed, but just supposing they had, just supposing people had a mouthful of gold teeth and that they had miraculously appeared, what difference does that make to the gospel?

[13 : 43] How is God blessing his people? Like, do you have a mouthful of gold teeth? How is he blessing them? I say, oh, look, this guy can speak in all this amazing sort of gibberish that nobody can understand.

So, how is that helping? How is that building up? How does that direct people to Christ for their alone means of salvation? And this is one of the things Paul wants to keep calling people back to.

Focus on Christ. Focus on Christ. And the law, as it leads us to Christ, focus on that which the Lord has revealed through his written word and through his servants, the prophets.

And of course, now we don't have the apostles physically with us, but we have their writings, such as we have. All that the Lord has committed to writing is now complete in terms of the written record.

And that does not mean, of course, that God never does a new thing or that God doesn't do something new in a different generation, but everything that is of God will always be in line with his written word.

[14 : 47] Timothy didn't have that benefit except the Old Testament scriptures, of course, against which to measure things to an extent, the Old Testament scriptures, and the teaching of the apostles.

The gospel accounts hadn't been written at this stage, but the teachings of the apostles would be absolutely in line with what Christ had revealed to them.

So these fables and endless genealogies minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith.

It's not directing people to the object of their faith, to Christ. It's a distraction. It's rather like if you're going mountain climbing or something like oh, have I got all my equipment?

I've got my high sacks, I've got my hiking boots, I've got this, I've got my rucksack and so on. I never thought in terms of to actually know where the mountain is. That's when you're going, oh, my equipment, I've got my maps, I've got my compasses, I've got everything.

[15 : 43] It's a distraction at the end of the day. Yes, maybe there'll be aspects of the journey you can't do without some of this equipment, but it's not about the equipment. It's about the mountain.

So likewise, if you were going to have a sporting activity, whether it's athletics, whether it's hurdles, whether it's brutal or whatever it happens to be, it's great if you've got a stadium and seats and people selling popcorn and fantastic grounds pitch and so on and all the equipment, that's wonderful, but you get more out of the actual game or the actual subject by somebody just running along the pavement training or some wee boys kicking a ball around under a lamppost and you would go, oh, fantastic facilities in the world.

It's not about the facilities. It's about the game. It's about the particular sport. It's about the particular subject. And where we're concerned with Christ, it's not about genealogies or who you descended from or what particular you have bull teeth in your mouth or whether or not, you know, you can do this and you can speak in tongues and you can do that.

It's about Christ. And everything must be measured against our relationship to Christ and how it draws us closer to Christ or how it helps others to be drawn to Christ.

And everything must serve that purpose because here's the fulfillment of all the scriptures. So in a sense, it might sound irrelevant and say, I don't personally believe there'll be any Bibles in heaven because we won't need them anymore.

[17 : 13] Their purpose will have been fulfilled because all the word of God will be personified in the person of Jesus Christ.

whom we will see face to face. We won't need Bibles in heaven. We won't need the written record of the scriptures anymore. Perhaps for all I know, we will already know them by heart and we're actively in heaven from start to finish.

At any rate, we will be in perfect communication with the living word of God, Jesus Christ. So we won't actually need the written transcription of the word. All of it points to the serving and worshipping of Christ.

Christ. So who give heed to these distractions which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith. Now the end of the commandment, there's two ways we can take this, the way that personally I prefer to take it is the fulfilment of the law is charity out of a pure heart, which is true.

The word we have translated as commandment, here in verse 5, is actually the same word as the word charge that we have in verse 3, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

[18 : 27] And again at verse 18, this charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy. So it is, if you like, the commission, it is the charge, the commandment that he receives. What is the end result of this charge I have given you, of the commandment of the law?

What we might also say at the same time is charity out of a pure heart. Now the word that we've got translated as end, it doesn't just mean sort of objective fulfilment, although that also is true, but it is the word for meaning at a distance.

It involves the word tele, from which we get telephone, as to speak at a great distance. Television, to be able to see something that is being from a great distance, and so on.

Telecommunications, to be able to communicate at a great distance. So rather, that which is the far off in the distance fulfilment of the charge, the ultimate objective and target is charity, love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a faithful thing.

You see, the gospel will not always necessarily be a spectacular thing. It won't necessarily, oh look, I've been speaking to us, look, I can fill my mouth with gold teeth, look, I can do this, oh look, bring that lightning from heaven, or I can cause people to be slain in the spirit, and oh isn't it dramatic, and so on.

[19 : 47] The gospel will not always do that. The spirit of Christ may, on occasion, do such miraculous things as this, but it's not ultimately about that. It is about changing people's lives and hearts.

Now I'm just going to cast a new reference on the Lord's nature, as somebody is in their heart. Proverbs 23, verse 7, where as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.

Whether for good or ill, what am I, the woman is in their heart, is what they are in truth. The bit you don't see, that's the reality. And this, you know, corresponds to what the Lord Jesus says in Luke chapter 6, verse 45.

A good man, out of the treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good. And an evil man, out of the evil treasures of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil, or of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaketh.

And the previous verses, 43 and 44, say, for a good tree, bringeth forth not corrupt fruit. Neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit.

[20 : 51] For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather big grapes. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good. And so on. Now, even if we were to take away, as I've mentioned on the previous occasions, even if you're taking away this connotation of negative or positive or good or evil, let's just think in terms of different.

If you plant an apple tree, then it doesn't matter how much you fertilise it and water it and try and make sure it's good, it's good, it's good, it's good. It's not going to produce pears.

It will produce apples, but it's not going to produce pears, because that's a completely different fruit. And likewise, if you plant brambles or raspberries or whatever it may be, then you're not going to get plums.

And you're not going to get grapes and so on. Because it's a completely different fruit. What the fruit that's going to be produced is going to be the same as the root that is under the soil. What you don't see under the soil is going to come out in the fruit that comes above the soil.

What you don't see hidden in the heart is nevertheless going to come out with the reality. The end of the commandment of the charge I'm giving you to believe is charity, love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a faith unfeigned.

[22 : 09] Now, a pure heart and a good conscience and genuine believing faith are not things that any person has by their ordinary human nature.

We are not born with pure hearts. We are born fond, corrupted, sinful. A child does not need to be taught how to tell lies or how to get its own way or how to grab what it wants without sort of thinking, does this belong to me or does it belong to somebody else?

A child does not have to be educated about being bad. It has to be educated about being good, about what is right. Because by nature we are a little better than animals at best or little demons at worst.

But the end of the commandment is charity, love, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, faith unfeigned. These are supernatural injections, as it were, that which the Lord can only put in our heart, from which some, having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangler that sounds musically good and impressive, but it doesn't actually do any good.

Desiring to be teachers of law, understanding neither what they say nor without the affirm. They want to be impressive. They want people to be wowed by them, but they don't actually understand what they're saying.

[23 : 31] It's as though I were to say, try and give a few words at my own stumbling lack of Gaelic to some of my relatives on the mainland. They don't speak Gaelic at all.

So whatever I come out with might sound impressive to them. And if I were to add in with the genuine Gaelic words, a few words of gibberish as well that were completely made up, they wouldn't be any the wiser.

They would think I was speaking very fluent Gaelic because they don't know any better. I don't know any better, but the minute a real Gaelic speaker comes in, he's talking absolute rubbish. He doesn't know what he's saying.

There's a couple of words in there that are genuine, but the rest is total rubbish. But it takes somebody who is genuinely knows the subject to be able to spot the fake. And this is what Paul is saying.

They don't understand what they're saying. They're spouting off about the law and pretending as though they can speak with authority and pontificate about it and so on. But they don't actually know what they're talking about.

[24 : 30] One reason for suggesting that this is probably coming from, shall we say, those of a Jewish background in this situation is that Ephesus was a Gentile city with a Jewish community in it, of course.

And if once you have begun to put your trust, your faith in the Messiah of Israel, the scriptures upon which you depend are those of the Israel of old or the people of the Jews.

So if somebody comes from that background and sounds as if they know what they're talking about and as if they can quote all these scriptures, which remember, nobody's actually really got the scrolls in front of them.

Very few people do or can check them up and read them and so on. And it sounds good. And to people who don't actually know better, it sounds as if they know what they're talking about.

But the fact is they're faking it. They're faking it and it's not real. They're desiring to be teachers of love. They want the reputation. They want to impress people.

[25 : 31] They want to ride the back of these, what they would think of as gullible believers. Believers are not all gullible, but they do have a predisposition to think the best of people.

If somebody comes and says, I can teach you this. I represent the Lord Jesus and his teachings and so on. Then to begin with, they'll give them the benefit of the doubt. To begin with, they'll think the best of people.

They won't automatically assume this guy's a liar. He's a fake. He must be. But gradually, little by little, as the truth comes out, they'll come to that and say, well, I want to believe him.

And of course we have to learn that, you know, this doesn't add up and that doesn't add up. And why would somebody who loves the Lord say this or do that? And gradually the evidence begins to stack up. Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm they do not know what they are talking about.

Because unlike Paul, they haven't had the authority and the command and the commission from the Lord. They haven't got that which Christ has given to Paul as an apostle and to the other apostles.

[26 : 39] They don't have the scriptures themselves buried in their heart and learned into their mind as Paul, who of course had a Pharisee upbringing. He would have memorized chunks of the scriptures and of the law.

So he knew the law and he knew the apostolic application of the law and the fulfillment of it in Christ. He knew what he was talking about and he was commissioned by God to deliver that message as the good news of Jesus Christ.

These guys were not. Their name jangling may have sounded good and it may have fooled some of the gullible, but it wasn't the truth. They have turned aside from that because the reality wasn't actually exciting enough for them.

It didn't give them the position that they wanted. It's like if somebody were to be in the army and say, well, I want to be in the front line. I want the medals. I want to be the one that storms the enemy position and plants the flag on the ramparts.

I want the glory. I want to be a hero. And that's all well and good. There's a place for heroes in battle situations and that's fine. But just as important to securing that victory will probably also be the unglamorous engineers that maybe dug the trench that kept the army safe or got the bridge that they could get all their equipment across the gorge or that dug the latrines so that there wasn't disease in the camp and made sure they had water and sewage supplies so that they would be provided for and protected from infection.

[28 : 15] Just as important are the cooks in the stores that make sure the army is fed and those who make sure they've got all the right amounts of ammunition and all the equipment that they need.

All of that is behind the lines. All of that is unglamorous. It doesn't grab the headlines. It doesn't make you look like a hero. But it's just as much a part of the battle. Just as much a part of the overall campaign as is the hero that plants the flag on the ramparts.

Some people want that glory but they're not necessarily prepared to take the spade and dig the trench of a latrine or go and load up the stores or make sure there's the food that they need to keep the army going and so on.

The gospel by and large is not glamorous but it is life changing. It does effect results within hearts, minds, souls and eventually communities as it changes people.

We know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully. What is the lawful use, the right use of the law? Well Paul makes reference to it himself in Romans 7.

[29 : 26] What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. May I have not known sin but by the law. So its purpose is to expose sin.

I had not known lust except the law had said I shall not covet. But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

I was alive without the law once but when the commandment came sin revived and I died. In other words it was exposed for what it was. And the commandment which was ordained in life I found to be unto death.

For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good. Because what he means by all that is that the law is that which showed me what a sinner I was.

I thought I was good but when I begin to look at the law I see how many of the commandments I break. I see how often I fail. I see how often I fall short.

[30 : 27] Once the law comes along it exposes me for what I am. And I died. Wherefore the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good. What's the rightness of the Lord is to expose him to show us our need of a saviour.

As Galatians 3.24 puts it. Wherefore the law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. That we might be justified by faith.

What the law shows us is how we cannot keep it of ourselves. Knowing this. That the law is not made for a righteous man.

The law is not that which will then show oh what a good guy you are. You keep the law. You keep this guy on. You keep that guy on. You keep the next one. The law is not made for a righteous man. But for the lawless and disobedient.

For those who will not be subject to God. For the ungodly and for sinners. Now those two words are translated. Ungodly and sinners. The one means simply one who has no thought of God.

- [31 : 29] They're just. The Lord is not in his life. Sinners implies those who actively transgress and delight in breaking God's laws and commands. For unholy and profane.

In other words those who are unholy in their heart. And those who outwardly also delight to break commands. Again. For murderers of fathers.

And murderers of mothers. Now the word translated murderers could be smiters. Those who beat or writ their fathers and mothers. Now you see a pattern emerging here. The lawless and disobedient.

The ungodly and sinners. To not have the Lord in your heart. Not worship God. Is a breach of the first commandment. You see that. And the sinners and unholy and profane.

Reach up the second. And also the third. You're having idols. You're taking the Lord's name in vain. You're profaning his own holy day. Murderers of fathers. And murderers of mothers.

- [32 : 27] Even if you're actually committing murder. It's just a smiting them. And a disobeying them. That's a breach of the fifth commandment. For manslaughters. Murderers. Breach of the sixth commandment.

Whoremongers. Those who defile themselves with mankind. Breach of the seventh commandment. For men stealers. Those who kidnap and sell into slavery. You know. Thou shalt not steal.

It's the eighth commandment. And to steal people. It's the worst of all. But for liars and perjured persons. The ninth commandment. And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.

Well thou shalt not covet. Which is the tenth commandment covers all the rest as well. Anything that is contrary to sound doctrine. According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

Which was committed to my trust. Anything else contrary to sound doctrine. If you're not caught by one of these particular breaches. Of a particular commandment. Anything else contrary to sound doctrine.

- [33 : 25] That catches everybody else. The law is there to show and expose sin. According to the glorious gospel.

The good news of the blessed God. Is that our failure under the law. The fact that all of our sin is exposed. And our filthiness is exposed.

And we're seen to be on the sentence of death. It doesn't have to stay like that. That is the good news. The glorious gospel. That in Christ Jesus.

The price of all this sin. Is paid. And it's not spectacular. In you and me. We may not be those. Who draw crowds.

Or speak in tongues. Or wow people. With all our spiritual gifts. We may just be the important of those. Camping out the stores. Making sure everybody's got the right clothing allowance.

- [34 : 19] And the right ammunition. And the right equipment. Those digging the chains. Those building the bridges. To bring the tanks across. Those who are doing all the backup. Which is vital to the campaign.

We will not all be heroes. With medals. Planting the flag. At the front of the enemy fortifications. We will not all be in that situation.

But. If we are part of the overall campaign. The overall army of the king. Then we're just as vital a situation. Because we have been changed.

From the enemy's army. To the Lord's. We are now on a different side. We're now in a different situation. We're now facing in a different direction.

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Which was committed to my trust. It's not about which commandments can we recite. Oh let's see how spectacular we are. That we can recite all our genealogy back for hundreds of years.

[35 : 16] Isn't that impressive? Yes but it doesn't actually change anything. It doesn't change your relationship to God. The fact that you may know all the commandments. Doesn't mean that you're keeping all the commandments.

All the law does. Is it exposes. How sinful we are. And then. When we are redeemed. And once we are saved.

And changed by Christ. The believer then will say. How can I please God? How can I serve him? Where will I turn to show my love for him?

Well he's revealed. What he wants us to do. In his laws and commands. We don't keep them now. At a slavish fear. Trying to earn. What is. What is a salvation we could never purchase for ourself.

Or the end of the commandment. This charity. Out of a pure heart. Out of a good conscience. Out of faith unfaithed. The gospel changes lives.

[36 : 13] Lives. The gospel changes hearts. Hearts are that which is hidden. But the outward foot. Is that which gradually will be seen.

This is the message of the gospel. This is what is committed to Paul. This is what is committed to Timothy. It may not be spectacular. It may not jangle and make a musical noise.

Like all the false teachers did. But it is the reality. And it is the crying need of humanity. In Timothy's day.

And in August. In Ephesus. And in the islands. Let's pray.