

Series	Gamma 17 – Study 1
Reference	1-Timothy 1:1-11
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Good evening brothers and sisters in Christ. Welcome back to the Gamma program. This is Gamma 17. This time we will be looking at the pastoral epistles, which are a bunch of letters written by Paul to Titus, as well as, Timothy, and in this first study we are going to be looking at the church of Ephesus. This is where Timothy was. And this is where Paul is writing to him from Macedonia.

Let's start with a word of prayer. Lord, we ask this evening that you be with us, grant us your Holy Spirit that we may discern your words, and as they resonate in our hearts they transform our lives. We ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Now Ephesus were the main churches in Asia Minor that Paul had spent almost two and a half years there ministering before he left and he left Timothy in charge and this letter, 1-Timothy actually comes from Macedonia, the mid 60s or 65 A.D and he writes directly to speak to Timothy.

Now Ephesus was a large church, sophisticated city at that time with amphitheatres and basically what the Pastoral epistles does is basically they prepare for the unleashing of the gospel. The whole track is to protect the gospel, practice gospel life style, as well as preach the gospel.

Let's look at the background. What was the purpose of Paul writing there? Four purposes.

Number one, to alert the churches to the necessity of fighting growing heresy.

Number two, to establish the church and its leaders both in teaching and behavior, so the church would function as the pillar and support of the gospel.

Number three, to give his close associates (Timothy and Titus) methods of procedure in churches for which they were responsible. It's like giving them SOPs.

Number four, to prepare his associates and church for the necessity of passing down the gospel, which may require suffering.

So here is what we're looking at in 1-Timothy. We are looking at first two verses. The stewardship of the gospel then encountering enemies of the gospel of which we will be looking at the heresies, the nature of heresies and the nature of the gospel. Then the conduct of the gospel in chapter two where we talk about prayer and the conduct of women and number three, gospel leadership, the elders and deacons and number four, guarding the gospel with a purpose of instruction, as well as, the response to countering heresy. This is the scheme, which we'll be looking at in this first Timothy letter. Right.

Now, let's start off with the steward of the gospel.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus, our hope, To Timothy, my true son in the faith, grace and mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now he starts off with his credentials, apostles. If you look at one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight letters of Paul, they always start off with his introduction as apostleship, because apostleship allow him the credentials and the authority to be able to speak, especially encountering heresies at this time. So he is an apostle of Christ Jesus, basically by the command of God, our savior and Jesus Christ our hope. These are Paul's credentials. And of course he has been chosen at the Damascus road where he was formerly a persecutor. He was basically struck down by a vision and God had actually raised him up. He had been struck blind for a while, until he saw Ananias and this is what the Lord said to him.

“Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry out my name before the gentiles.

He is telling Ananias to go to Paul.

He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the gentiles and Kings and children of Israel. For, I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.

Right. So basically that's Paul. And then he writes to Timothy, my true child in the faith. While Timothy is relatively young, 30 years old compared to Paul, he is considered his child, but it is true child in the faith. They pass cross in Act 16, one of missionary journeys where Paul went to Derbe and then to Lystra, a disciple there was named Timothy, son of a Jewish woman was also a believer but his father was a Greek. So that is basically mixed. And here is Derbe and Lystra where Timothy was and he was well-spoken off by his brothers in Lystra and Iconium.

So he is a fine upstanding young man who was well-spoken off and Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him and he took him, he circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places for, they all knew that his father was a Greek. So therefore, even though his mother was Jew, he became Paul's protege and wherever he took him, he actually had him circumcised because of the prejudices at a time, you can't enter the synagogue and claim to be a Jew if you were not circumcised.

So for the sake of unity, he is circumcised, he is culturally sensitive. Because you must understand the time of the church, the church had already just emerged from his Jewish roots and going to gentiles and so you have to be very careful not to do too great a jump culturally. Same thing in Acts chapter 15. They had a big debate on whether they should, you know, impose kosher food on gentile Christians, or the imposed circumcision and what they did was they decided that they should write to the churches to tell them to abstain from things polluted by idols, which is correct, from sexual immorality and for what has been strangled and from blood.

Why? Because from ancient generations, Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read in every Sabbath in the synagogues. Because wherever they are going, they first share the gospel with the Jews and the Jews are very familiar that they couldn't eat anything or any animals when they still have blood in them, it had to be drained and done in a Kosher manner. So to be sensitive, they allowed this to go on for a while.

Now, Timothy was a young in his 30s. Some people say he is timid, but not necessarily so. He is certainly inexperienced. He may have a physical infirmity where he has got stomach trouble, Paul asked him to take wine and he is also perhaps bullied because of his age. 1-Timothy chapter 4 verse 12 says,

Let no one despise you because of your youth.

And now,

To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

So the greetings that Paul sends; grace, unmerited favor, mercy, which is the whole reason why Timothy and Paul actually have obtained salvation, and Shalom, peace, reconciliation with God and Christ Jesus, our Lord. This is what unites Paul with Timothy and unites every single Christian anywhere in the world, is the fact that all of us have received grace, which we do not deserve. We have received mercy from our penalty of our sin, and we are now at peace with God. These three are most important in our experience, share common experience as believers.

Firstly, they got going to be countering enemies of the gospel. This looking at the nature of the heresy. First of all,

As I urge you, when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain people not to teach any different doctrine, not to devote themselves to myths, endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

So this is a warning. Way back in Acts, Paul had called all the elders of the church in Ephesus to speak to them. And he said to them,

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to the flock, which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (elders), to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his blood.

So this is a church which Christ paid for with his blood.

I know that after my departure fierce wolves (these are false teachers) will come in among you and not sparing the flock, and from among your own selves will arise from your own people, their own church, people, men speaking twisted things to draw the disciples away after them.

All right. There are a lot of false teaching there. The overview of the false teaching conform into four categories; myths and speculations on the law, asceticism or basically denying yourself certain things, greed as well as denial of a future resurrection. So on the whole the pastoral epistles deals with four kinds of false teachings.

We're going to look at the nature of false teaching, the character of the false teachers, the effect of the false teaching and also one example of relevant false teaching today. All right. Which is similar.

So first of all,

I charge certain person not to teach any different doctrine or devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations.

So, a false doctrine, a false teaching is something that is different or deviates from the gospel, which Paul has passed down to Timothy and in this particular case, the genealogies and myths actually from the early chapters of Genesis. All right. We don't exactly know what the nature of them are. There is no historical data. We can only speculate, so we're not going to do that. It's just that we know that these false teachings come from this genealogies and myths. And also, it has got to do with the law because

Certain people being swerved from these have wandered away into vain discussions, desiring to be teachers of law but without understanding either what they're saying or the things about which they

make confident assertions.

So they are very confident, they are standing up there, preaching saying a lot of things about the law but they don't really understand.

For we know that the law is good, only if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and this disobedient.

So therefore the nature of these false teachings that they are actually applying the law, the law is not necessarily bad, it is good but it depends on how you apply it. So they are basically distorting the application of this law. If you look in chapter 4,

Now does Spirit expressly state that in later time some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of the demons. And through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

So here we have a group of people who are saying, the more Holy way to live is to be celibate and not be engaged in marriage. The more Holy way to live, yes salvation by Jesus is good, but if you stop eating pork, stop eating beef, stop eating any of these crabs and all these Old Testament kind of foods, yes you will grow closer to God. 1-Titus 1:10.

There are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers, deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party.

So obviously these false teachers probably come from Jews. They must be silenced because they cause all sorts of trouble. Now the problem here is we have got the old covenant, which looks forward to Jesus who starts a new covenant. And what they are doing is that they are taking all the vestiges of the old government, which is basically circumcision, food laws, feasts, temple sacrifices and tithes, all of these are brought forward as a requirement alongside the faith in Jesus Christ. And the characteristics of these false disciples or teachers. Well, they actually devote themselves. They're very devoted, enthusiastic themselves to miss an endless speculation. They are busy sharing. They might have had a wonderful experience. They may have been into drug addiction or some marital problems and then somehow when they started fasting, you know, abstaining for certain foods then somehow they believe God has intervened in their lives. So they adopt a different lifestyle. They are totally devoted.

I remember the Toronto Blessing some years ago, when a group of people from Toronto actually started bursting out in laughter. Some of them actually had animal sounds as well as if it is a sign or a gift from the Holy Spirit, and they were so devoted and so enthusiastic about this because when they actually experienced these things, it made a change in their lives. So based on, many of these false teachings come from people who base experiences on this false phenomenon. Right. We can see how on June 6 many people of the American population were misled basically by lies. It is so easy to deceive normal citizens. All right.

What is the effect of the false teaching?

There are two effects that we can see. One speculation, so that sitting there the whole day and they are drawing attention to themselves. Why? Because they are discussing their views or certain doctrines and they are not based in scripture. They're based on speculations, going beyond what scripture says and implying things. And this builds up pride. So the effect is pontificating on these doctrines being puffed

up with pride. And number two basically, it draws the attention from actual stewardship, which is serving. True faith will result in love in love results in service and all this is distracting these folk and the people who listen to them. So they engage in vain discussions.

Now, the difference between false and true gospel. Well, Paul says the aim of our charge, which is different from the false teachers charge, is love and this love issues from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. These are the three characteristics of the true gospel. And you compare them side by side with the false gospel, instead of love, authentic love from a heart that desires God and a heart because it is transformed by the love of God. He loved us and we love because he first loved us then that is pure love to our fellow man. Instead, we focus all our time on speculations, on this theory and that theory and in the end we are not ministering to anybody or loving anybody. Our good conscience, which means your behavior that conforms to, is actually good behavior, conforms to your conscience. Instead of focusing on applying God truth, you're focusing on vain discussions. A sincere faith, trusting in God for salvation. Here they are not even ministering or being transformed at all.

The common targets are false teaching even today, we need to be very careful, will always target salvation and the law or even target sovereignty of God. There's a false teaching called the Open Theism that says, God doesn't quite know what's going to happen. He's basically reacting to what man does. There will be plenty of false teaching, especially the early church on the nature of the Trinity, especially in a divinity of Jesus. Some people doubt the existence of the devil. Then there are lots of false teaching on inerrancy and authority of the Bible. This is being diluted. People are saying, Bible doesn't really, it's not really the word of God. They try to move away from that and have other supplements. And then the attack is often on the person of Jesus Christ that he was not born a virgin. He is not God, the doubt the atonement, he didn't get resurrected or maybe he is not coming back again. These are the common targets of false teaching. And if you touch any of these areas, you'll wander into heresy.

Lastly, I'm going to give you an example of a false teaching of the law that is actually in our society today. And this is basically the Hebrew Roots movement, which are group of people who decided that the most important thing for the disciples now is to follow the Torah; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. So their main beliefs; we need to keep the Torah. And in that case, when you keep in Torah, you have to keep dietary laws. You have got to keep the Sabbath, which means you meet on Saturday, not Sunday. And some of the more extreme ones will actually force you to go through circumcision. Of course, because they are not homogenous, many of these people have differing beliefs. These are the main pillars of their belief, and you can see their characteristic. They will address God as Yhwh and Jesus as Yeshua. Right.

So there justification is that gentile Christians have been grafted into Israel and because you're grafted in Israel, you've got to follow what Israelites do. So this obligates the followers of Christ to obey the Torah just as Israelites obey the Torah. And they obey out of love for God and obedience. They will deny that they obey in order to gain salvation. God commands us to keep his commandments. Jesus kept the Torah, he didn't abolish the Torah. So we must be like Jesus and keep the Torah as well. This is basically their justification.

And in most false teachings, there is an element of truth and also the element of untruth. So you selectively take facts out that will suit your overall theory. So we've got to be very careful. Most false teachings always have an element of truth. Right. Look at how Paul counters this.

We know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless, for the disobedient, for the ungodly, for the sinners, for the unholy and the profane and those who strike their fathers and mothers for murderers.

So basically law is good, but you need to be able to know how to use it. All right. What we are saying is that the law is actually not laid down for the just but for the lawless, the purpose of law is basically to point us to show that we have actually crossed the line. All right, that the law is not laid down for the just, but for the lawless. It is like us going to the shopping mall. Thermometers are there during COVID-19 to pick out the people with the fever. Thermometers are not there to pick up the people who have got no fever. The moment you go and enter the mall, if the thermometer screams out 38 fever, which means you are in default, you have transgressed the law. So you've got to go to Sungai Buloh, isn't it. Right.

So Martin Luther in his introduction to the commentary of Galatians rights, the purpose of law, political or civil, the laws are bridled for restraint for the uncivilized because it provides a moral framework for societies to act. Otherwise, society will be unrestrained. Because they'll know when they cross the line and there is also theological. It is a mighty hammer to crush the self-righteousness of human beings.

So if you really understood the law and he read the law, it would basically crush you if you believe that you could follow this law and be righteous enough to earn a place in heaven. Right. Another function of law is an indicative function. It points to something. And this is very important, which a lot of people have forgotten. We've got dietary laws, kosher laws and non-kosher laws. And the reason why we get these dietary laws in the Old Testament is to differentiate Israel from other nations, Israel is set apart by just limiting themselves to certain kinds of foods.

If you look at the temple, the way it's designed that the ordinary worshipper will come over here, have the burnt offering and the priest will come inside here and then the Holy, the chief priest will come in here once a year after one week of preparation to the Holy of Holies.

So here we acknowledge our sin. The temple tells us that we are sinful and progressively it limits our access to the Holy of Holies. Right. It tells us of our sinfulness and his holiness. Animal sacrifices tells us the cost of sin. That sin has a price, and it is not paid in money, but it is paid with life. Now Hebrews 10 tells us about the indicative function of the law,

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

So basically the law gives you some semblance of what is going to come. Animal sacrifices. They don't really take your sin away, but they give you some idea that life needs to be lost in order to basically cleanse us from our sin. Otherwise they would not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed would no longer have any consciousness of sin, but in these sacrifices is a reminder of sins every year for it's impossible for blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. And here you actually have them offering these sacrifice year in and year out. The fact that you have to offer sacrifices repeatedly is a reminder that sacrifice of animal is insufficient to take away your sin because you'll always have sin, year in and year out.

So there's a reminder of the sins every year, because it is impossible for the bull and blood of bulls and goats to take away the sin and this points to the final Lamb who will take away the sin once and for all sacrifice. So when Jesus came, he said in Matthew 5,

Do not think that I've come to abolish the law of the prophets, I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them for truly I say to you until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota not a dot will pass from the law until it is all accomplished.

So what Jesus meant when he came in, was it with the new covenant, all the conditions of the old covenant of the law, all the requirements are met in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The law is not abolished, but it is obsolete because it is being replaced by something even greater, but the purposes of the law are still valid. Colossians Paul writes,

Let no one pass judgment on you in terms of questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival of new moon or Sabbath. These are shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

So the law has an indicative function. It's a shadow. When you look at the shadow, obviously there's somebody else behind the shadow, isn't it? Somebody else must be there and that's in the new covenant. It's like a girl, she's got a boyfriend and all the time she is texting their boyfriend, looking at boyfriend when the boyfriend stands next to her, she is still looking at the phone. All right, you forget.

So people who are focusing just on the Old Testament and the law, they're still on their handphone. Boyfriend standing next to them. The real deal has arrived and they refused to reckon with the real deal. Right.

Paul is concerned for the Jews that they miss all the signs, Romans chapter 10, verse 2

For I bear witness that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Yeah, they are sincere, but they are not really knowledgeable. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

God's righteousness is the righteousness and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They don't want that. What they want to do is to be ignorant and righteousness of God and they seek their own righteousness. All right. So this is the old covenant and basically God gives you clues or breadcrumbs. And here we have the Passover, we celebrate because of salvation for the Jews from Egypt. All right. Who are actually basically enslaving them. And you actually had to kill the Passover lamb, put his blood on the doorpost. In the New Testament, we actually celebrate the death of Christ, death and resurrection, a sacrifice of Christ, his blood and the wine and the bread. So basically the Old Testament points to the reality of Christ coming. The Old Testament takes that paradigm of salvation from Egypt and applies this to the New Testament paradigm of salvation from all our sin, basically.

So we need to move on. Remember in those days when we were doing computers, we used to have all this punch cards, they tell the code. They we have got floppy disc. I wonder how many of you at home got floppy disks anymore? I don't even have one anymore. Then if you've got CD rom and then CD ROMs are almost out, you've got thumb drives and nowadays we don't even have that. We actually have the cloud. So they are all the same. If you actually look at it, they all convey the same thing. The floppy drive, the punch card, the USB stick and the cloud. The function of each is to provide information transfer, but the mode in which it occurs is completely different. One floppy drive will have a couple of kilobytes of data. Right now, you can put in the cloud gigabytes of data. The form is change, but the actual principle and purpose remains the same.

And so if you look at the old covenant and the new covenant, you've got all the festivals, Passover, unleavened bread, firstfruits, booths, day of atonement, trumpets, Pentecost, all of them point in some way to that Jesus Christ will come and who will fulfill all of these things. But what the Jews had done is that they actually stayed here. They focused on all these things. If they actually perform these ceremonies, if they actually ate kosher food, this becomes their intrinsic righteousness. The indicative function of the law is lost.

You see, Paul writes.

For being ignorant and righteous of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness for Christ is the end of the law.

The word a Greek word is Telos, which is the goal. Christ is the goal to which the law points and when the goal is reached, the law comes to an end. It points us because we've crossed the line. We have sinned, we need Christ and Christ himself has fulfilled every aspect of our life. That's why he led a sinless life. And he fulfills it on our behalf. And this laws function like a shadow to point us to the real thing, and if we don't go to the real thing then we have actually missed out. And once the real thing comes then the law becomes obsolete, Hebrews 8:13,

In speaking of a new covenant, he made the first one (Old Testament covenant) obsolete.

What is obsolete? In growing old, ready to vanish away. It's non-relevant. How many of you at home are still bringing a floppy disk? Are you using floppy disks anymore? None of us are using. We're still transmitting data, but we're using the cloud as it were. And Jesus commands, therefore take the place of the law. You can see, he says that

Until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota or dot will pass from the law until it's all accomplished.

And once it's accomplished basically in Matthew 24, he says,

My words, heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away.

This is the cloud drive. No more floppy drive. Jesus commands takes the place of the law. And then for those who are Christian, like Paul, as far as the law is concerned, if he's interacting with basically Jewish people, he is saying, you know,

Though I am free from all, I've made myself a servant to all that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became a Jew in order win Jews. To those under the law, I became one under the law thought not being myself under the law, that I might win those under the law.

And to those with a Gentile background he is saying

To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God, but under the law of Christ) that I may win those outside the law.

So what he is saying, the law no longer becomes that thing or that standard to which I must comply in order to be saved. Actually, that law becomes actually of cultural relevance. So, when he actually ministers amongst the Jews, he follows the law, all the dictates of the law. He doesn't eat pork, he doesn't eat crab, so that they are not stumbled. For him, whether he eats or not, it doesn't really apply to him anymore. It's obsolete. And for those outside the law, he probably be eating pork with them, no issue at all. Right.

So to those under the law, I became as under the law, although not being myself under the law. Why, what is the basis of him doing that? Because he wants to be able to win that kind of recognition that he will have that kind of credibility so that he will be able to speak to them and share with them about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Those outside the law, I became as one outside of law, not being outside of the law, but under the law of Christ.

It is not that he's lawless, he is under Christ's law. And Christ law is basically very simple, to bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ, which means loving one another.

Here is an example of a politician, a Christian politician, Hannah Yeoh. When she is ministering or basically mixing and socializing with Muslims under the Sharia law, she acts as if she's under Sharia law. She wears a head veil, which is outside with people who are not under Sharia law, she doesn't wear a head veil as well because she is only under the law of Christ. The Old Testament law doesn't apply anymore. So therefore we are given Christ given freedom.

5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

You know, there's so many Christians who are trying to judge each other, a whole bunch of Christians who refuse to celebrate Christmas. I, you know, they say Christmas is a pagan festival and actually they are right. It is taken in Europe is a pagan festival, but actually Christianize it. So, if you celebrate Christmas, that's fine. If you don't celebrate Christmas, that's fine too, as well as you do it for the glory of God, but you don't judge other people. Right.

What about kosher foods? Jesus Christ has declared all foods clean. Alright, so now we are released from the law. Romans 7,

Having died to what has held us captive so that we can serve in a new way of the spirit, not in the old way of the written code.

So the Holy spirit actually guides us. All right. And this is under the new covenant, Hebrews 8:10

For this is the covenant that I will make into the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord, I will put my law into their minds and write it on their hearts and I will be their God and they will be my people.

So the new covenant is not the dead letter of law, but it is something written in our hearts prompted by the Holy Spirit. So Romans 3:21,

But for now, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and prophets bear witness to it as indicative function, the righteousness of God through faith in Christ Jesus for all who believe.

We. The law is not for the just. We are made just. We have the righteousness of God because of our faith in Jesus Christ and false teaching will try to move us away from that. So let us continue to be faithful to God in his gospel.