

Tidbits From Timothy

1 Timothy 4-6



There are all kinds of letters.

Some letters have a specific point - like a cover letter, a reference letter or a love letter.

We don't write letters much any more.

At best we write greeting cards with our own hands.

We went to e-mails, and now to twitter.

Messaging is sometimes no more than a single word or emoji.

Letter writing is a lost art.

Paul's letter to Timothy meanders a little.

He has somethings he knows he wants to write

but there are some things that seem to just pop into his head.

It's actually more free form and some of these thoughts are what I'd like to trace for us.

Because our lectionary covers Chapters 4-6 this week of 1 Timothy,

I'm just going to extract a few interesting bits to talk about.

Faithfulness in Youth



4:12-14

12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. 14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Have you ever experienced ageism?

That is someone discriminating against you because of your age.

"You're too young, what do you know?"

A young person may not have experience, but they have passion

and it doesn't mean they don't know God.

In fact, children's ministry can be the most important ministry in the church.

Youth and University ministry can be the most challenging and life changing ministry.
It is those of us who are adults that are in danger of losing our love and passion for God.
The older folks can become proud and complacent.
We need to always think of ourselves as young, as children.
Always willing to learn and grow.
We either become roadblocks and barriers for the young
or we will become mentors and encouragers of the next generation.

Paul writes this to Timothy because Timothy was considered young in his culture.
The likelihood was that he was in his thirties.
But remember, Jesus began his ministry around the age of 30.
King David became King at the age of 30.
This is a significant verse for anyone who considers themselves young.
Know that God does not discriminate against you because you are young.
In fact, many great things of faith were accomplished by young people.
David fought and killed Goliath when he was about 17 years old.
A little slave girl told the General Naaman about her faith which led him to be healed
by God through the prophet Elisha of his leprosy.
A young boy shared his lunch with Jesus and they ended up feeding over 5000 people.
At any age you can be an example even to older Christians.

And older believers, never ever look down on younger Christians.

Generation to Generation



5:1-2

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Paul give practical advice about how to relate with people of different age groups.
In fact one of the problems of our society and our churches is segregation of age groups.
Instead of teaching us to learn from one and other and appreciate each other,
We isolate and alienate age groups and life stages.
Singles and families don't understand or care about each other.

Parents demand churches provide childcare and youth groups just like school

We perpetuate a consumer mentality in the church.

We perpetuate generational rifts.

Timothy is taught to relate with people at different ages.

If you are afraid of people of a different age group you need to ask yourself why?

You don't like children? Check that.

You don't like older folks? Check that.

You only want to hang out with people your age group? Check that.

What are you afraid of?

What are you assuming?

It is about treating other people with sensitivity and understanding.

It is not about serving yourself and what you want.

It is about a mutual care and service to one another.

Wine in the Early Church



5:23

23 Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

I had to pick this one because there are sometimes judgments made on things that are peripheral.

At some point in Canada and the U.S. there was prohibition

Before that there was a very strong temperance movement.

Now this is with good reason.

People were literally wasting their lives and even dying from drunkenness.

It was an epidemic blight upon society.

The reaction towards it was therefore - just don't do it.

In some parts of the church wine was banned as an evil.

Here, Paul is telling Timothy not to drink just water but to take wine!

Now, there is also context for this.

Water in other parts of the world and other times is not like what we have here in Vancouver.

We can open a tap and drink that water because it is considered

among the best water in the world.

Allow me to say this as a public service announcement.

Unless your water is contaminated for some unusual reason,
you do not need to drink bottled water.

Bottled water is not necessarily better than what comes out of your tap.

In fact, it may be worse.

Look it up.

And if you do drink bottled water, recycle!

What are we to walk away with here?

The ideas of moderation and context.

Do not condemn something you do not understand.

A practical application in our community is that we use wine for communion.

In particular we use Port or Apera because it is red in colour and
can remain drinkable after a bottle is opened because it is at least 17% alcohol.

But know this:

If someone in our congregation suffers from alcoholism,

We will begin to provide an alternative in juice.

So do let me know.

There is no shame here.

Just like Kim makes a different kind of bread for Ellie because of her allergies.

This is not about just rules - it is about loving one another.

Wealth & Contentment



6:6-10;17-19

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Paul writes elsewhere -

"I know what it is to have much and what it is to have little.

I have learned the secret of being content."

I know one of the biggest concerns these days is housing.

Some of us own and some of us rent.

Some of us want more than what we currently have.

We want to climb a social ladder.

We want more stuff.

Now there is nothing wrong about doing your best or excelling in your work.

Whatever you do, do your best.

But if your life is controlled by either the lack of money or the desire for it

You are in spiritual trouble.

With this comes lack of faith.

With this come miserliness - the hoarding of money for you and your own.

There is nothing wrong with have more or with having less.

It how you feel about what you have and what you do with it that matters.

If the pursuit of money makes you compromise the teaching of Jesus, that is a danger.

If you are not giving regularly whether to the church or to charity, you are in danger.

The way of Christ is the way of contentment.

The way of Christ is the way of generosity.

Peace be with you.